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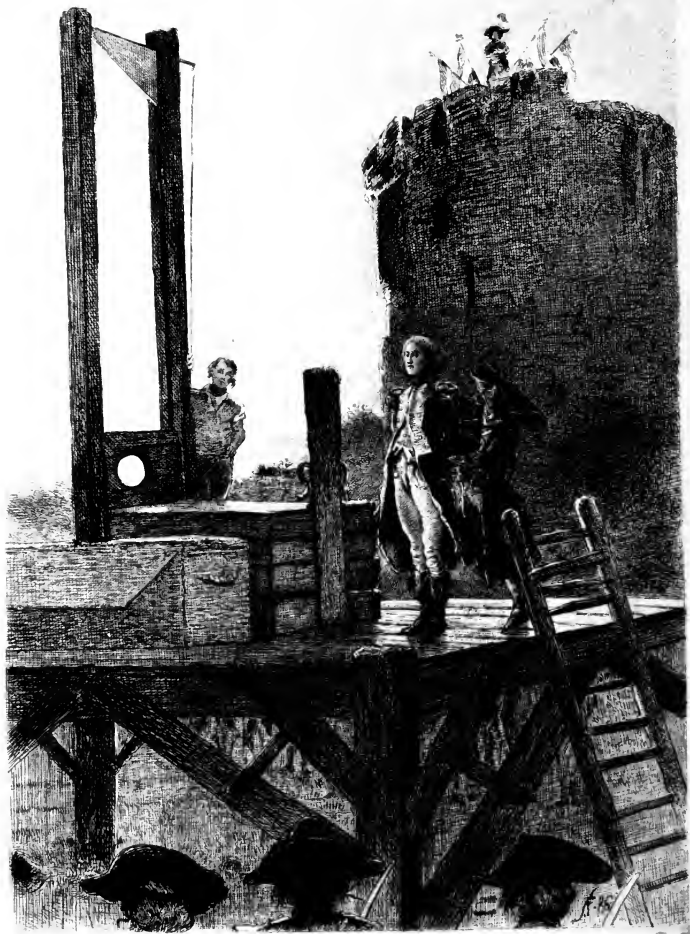
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THE COMPANY OF JEHU.

VOLUME I.







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THE

COMPANY OF JEHU

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IN TWO VOLUMES

VOL. I.

ONTARIO.

BY ALEXANDRE DUMAS

TRANSLATED BY

KATHARINE PRESCOTT WORMELEY



WITH ILLUSTRATIONS

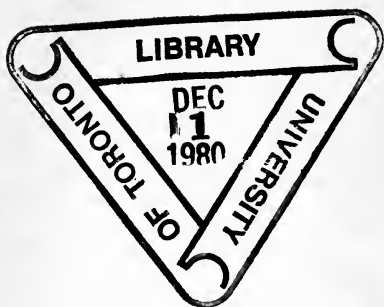
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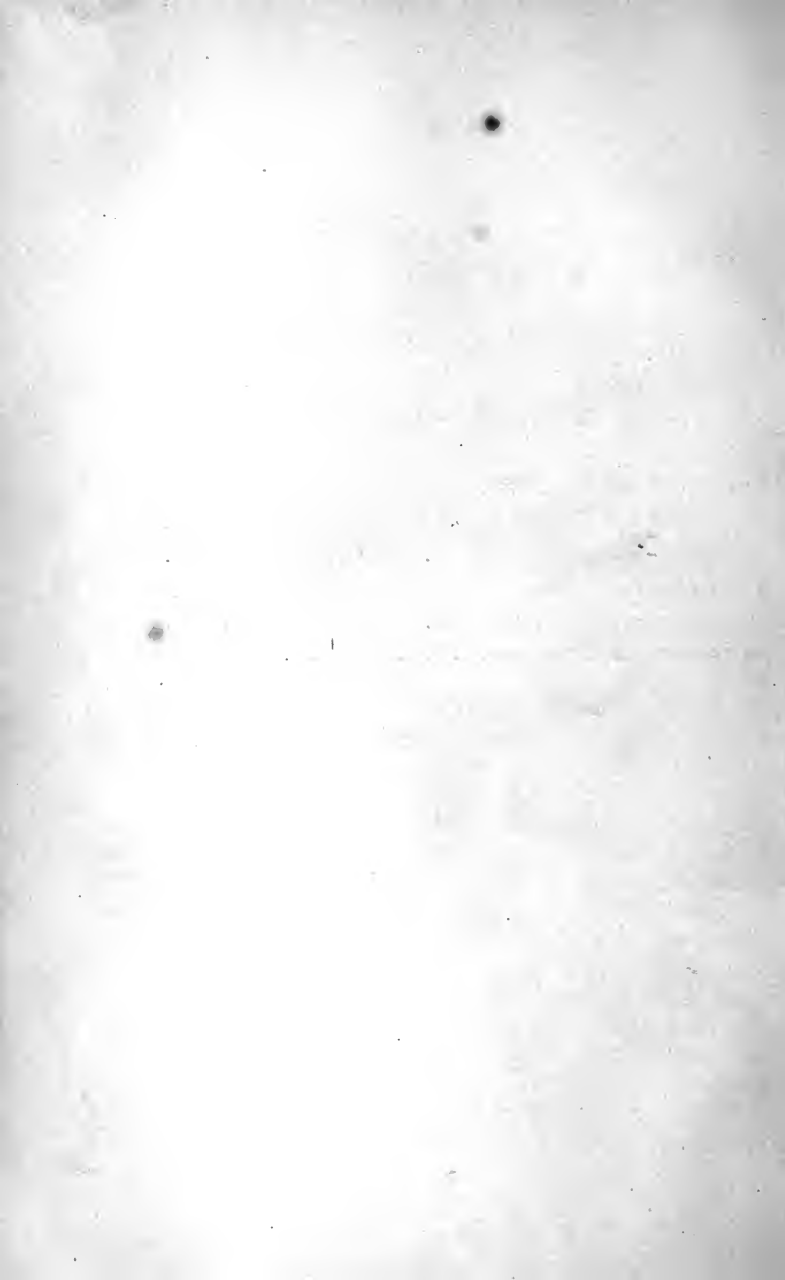
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THE COMPANY OF JEHU.

A WORD TO THE READER.

It is about a year since my old friend, Jules Simon, author of "Devoir" asked me to write him a novel for the "Journal pour Tous." I told him the subject of one which I had in my mind. It suited him; and we came to an agreement on the spot.

The action took place from 1791 to 1793, and the first chapter opened at Varennes the evening of the king's arrest.

I told Jules Simon that however impatient the "Journal" might be, I must have a fortnight before I began the book. I wanted to go to Varennes; I had never been to Varennes.

Now there is one thing I cannot do; I cannot write a book or a drama about localities I have never seen. To write "Christine" I went to Fontainebleau; to write "Henri III." I went to Blois; to write "Les Trois Mousquetaires" I went to Béthune and Boulogne; to write "Monte-Cristo" I returned to the Catalans and the Château d'If; to write "Isaac Laquedem" I revisited Rome; and I did, most certainly, spend more time in studying Jerusalem and Corinth from a distance than it would have taken me to go there.

That gives such a character of truth to what I write that the personages I plant in certain places seem to grow

there ; and some people have been led to think they have actually existed ; in fact, there are persons who say they have known them. With regard to this, I shall tell you a little thing in confidence, my dear readers, only don't repeat it. I do not wish to injure worthy family-men who live by the little industry, but if you go to Marseille they will show you Morel's house on the Cours, Mercédès' house at the Catalans, and the dungeons of Dantès and Faria at the Château d'If.

When I brought out "Monte-Cristo" at the Théâtre-Historique I wrote to Marseille for a drawing of the Château d'If, which they sent me. I wanted it for the scene-painter. The artist to whom I had written not only sent me the sketch, but he did more than I had ventured to ask of him ; he wrote underneath it : "View of the Château d'If on the side from which Dantès was flung."

I have heard since that a worthy fellow, a guide attached to the Château d'If, sells pens of fish-bones made by the Abbé Faria himself. Unluckily, Dantès and the Abbé Faria never existed except in my imagination ; consequently, Dantès could not have been flung from the top to the bottom of the Château d'If, neither could the Abbé Faria have made pens. But that is what it is to visit localities.

So I wanted to go to Varennes before beginning my novel, the first scene of which was to be in Varennes. Besides, historically Varennes puzzled me ; the more I read the historical accounts of Varennes the less I could understand, topographically, the arrest of the king. Accordingly I proposed to my young friend Paul Bocage to go with me to Varennes. I was certain he would accept. The mere proposal of such a trip to that charming and picturesque imagination was enough to make its owner bound from his chair to the railroad.

We took the railroad to Châlons. At Châlons we bargained with a stable-keeper, who, for a consideration of ten francs a day lent us a horse and a carry-all. We were gone

seven days, — three days in going from Châlons to Varennes, three days in returning from Varennes to Châlons, and one day to make all our local researches on the spot.

I discovered, with a satisfaction you will readily understand, that not a single historian had been historical, and, with a satisfaction greater still, that M. Thiers had been the least historical of all of them. I suspected that already, but I was not certain. The only writer who had been accurate, with absolute accuracy, was Victor Hugo in his book called "The Rhine." It is true that Victor Hugo is a poet, and not an historian. What historians poets might be if they would only consent to make themselves historians! One day Lamartine asked me to what I attributed the immense success of his "Histoire des Girondins." "To the fact that you rose to the level of the novel," I replied. He reflected a long time and ended, I believe, in being of my opinion.

I stayed one day at Varennes, and visited all the localities necessary for my story, which was to be called "René d'Argonne." Then I came away. My son was passing the summer in his country-house at Sainte-Assise, near Melun. My room awaited me. I resolved to go and write my novel there.

I don't know two natures more unlike than Alexandre's and mine, which, nevertheless, go perfectly together. He and I certainly have many happy hours when we are apart, but I believe we have none happier than those we spend together.

Well, at the end of three or four days I was just where I was at first, — trying to begin my "René d'Argonne," taking up the pen, and immediately laying it down again. It would n't go. I consoled myself by telling stories. It so happened that I told one which Nodier had told me. It was about four young men belonging to the Company of Jehu, who were executed at Bourg in Bresse under the most dramatic circumstances. One of these four young men, the one who had most difficulty in dying, or rather the one they

had the most difficulty in killing, was nineteen and a half years old.

Alexandre listened to my tale with much attention. When I had finished he said:—

“Do you know what I should do if I were you?”

“What?”

“I should let your ‘René d’Argonne,’ which does n’t crystallize, go, and I should write ‘The Company of Jehu’ instead.”

“But I have got the other in my head; it is almost finished.”

“It will never be finished, if it is n’t finished now.”

“Perhaps you are right; but I shall lose six months in getting to where I am now.”

“Pooh! in three days you will have written half a volume.”

“Then you must help me.”

“You are too grasping! I am busy with my ‘Question d’argent.’”

“Well, I don’t know but what you’re right. Wait a minute.”

“I am waiting.”

“Have you Nodier’s ‘Souvenirs de la Révolution’?”

“I have all Nodier’s works.”

“Then go and get me his ‘Souvenirs de la Révolution.’ I think he has written two or three pages about Guyon, Leprêtre, Amiet, and Hyvert.”

“They will say you have plagiarized from Nodier.”

“Oh, he loved me too well in his lifetime not to give me whatever I take from him after death. Go and get the book.”

Alexandre fetched it. I turned over three or four pages and found what I wanted. A little of Nodier, my dear readers, will do you no harm; this is what he says:—

The highwaymen who robbed the diligences, as stated in the article on Amiet from which I have just quoted, were named Leprêtre, Hyvert, Guyon, and Amiet.

Leprêtre was forty-eight years old. He was a former captain of dragoons, a knight of Saint-Louis, of a noble countenance, a fine carriage, and great elegance of manner. Guyon and Amiet have never been known by their real names. They were light-hearted young fellows, between twenty and thirty years of age, bound to each other by some mutual responsibility, which might be that of a bad action or of some more delicate and generous motive, possibly the fear of compromising their family name. Nothing more than this has ever been known of Guyon and Amiet. The latter had a sinister countenance, and he may owe the bad reputation his biographers have given him to the wickedness of his face. Hyvert was the son of a rich merchant in Lyon, who offered the sheriff in whose charge he was, sixty thousand francs to allow him to escape. He was the Paris and the Achilles of the band. His figure was of medium height but well set-up, his bearing graceful, animated, and refined. His eyes were never without an eager glance, nor his lips without a smile. He had one of those countenances which present an inexpressible mingling of sweetness and strength, tenderness and energy, and are never forgotten. When he gave himself up to the eloquent petulance of his inspirations he rose to enthusiasm. His conversation showed the rudiments, at least, of a fine education; and great natural intelligence. The thing that was distressing about him was a tone of heedless gayety, which contrasted horribly with his position. In other respects every one agreed that he was kind, generous, humane, and easily managed by feeble persons; while against the strong he liked to exhibit a vigor that was really athletic, though his rather effeminate features gave little indication of strength. He boasted of never wanting money, and of never having made an enemy. That was his sole answer to the charge of robbery and murder. He was twenty-two years old.

These four men were accused of attacking a diligence which carried forty thousand francs of government money. The deed was done in broad day, almost courteously, and the occupants of the coach, who were not meddled with, cared little about it. But it so happened that a boy, only ten years old, with heedless bravery, snatched the pistol of the conductor and fired it into the midst of the assailants. As that pacific weapon was only loaded with powder, no harm was done; but the persons in the coach had a great and natural fear of reprisals. The boy's mother was seized with so dreadful a nervous attack that anxiety on her account diverted the attention of all, and particularly that of the brigands. One of them

sprang to her side and reassured her in a manner that was almost affectionate, praising the precocious courage of her son, and offering smelling-salts and perfumes, with which these gentry were usually well supplied for their own use. The lady recovered; and her travelling companions noticed that in this moment of excitement the robber's mask fell off; but they did not see his face.

The police of those days, being limited to mere observation, were unable even to check the attacks of these banditti; and yet they did not lack means to get upon their traces. Appointments were made openly at the cafés; narratives were there told of deeds to which the penalty of death was attached. This shows the condition of public opinion on the subject. These men of blood and terror appeared in society in the evening and talked of their nocturnal expeditions as though they were parties of pleasure. Leprêtre, Guyon, Amiet, and Hyvert were arraigned before the criminal court of a neighboring department. No one was the worse for the attack on the coach except the Treasury, and nobody cared for that, for no one any longer knew to whom it belonged. Moreover, no one had recognized the assailants, unless it were the lady, and she took very good care not to do so. The prisoners were therefore unanimously acquitted.

Still the evidence was so strong against them that the ministry felt obliged to reopen the case. The verdict was broken; but such was the uncertainty of power at that time, that the government was almost afraid to punish excesses which might, on the morrow, be thought great deeds. The accused were sent for their second trial to the court at Bourg, a town which contained a number of their friends and relatives, their abettors and accomplices. The ministry thought it satisfied the demands of one party by returning the assailants to the law, while it did not displease the other side by sending them for trial where they would almost infallibly be acquitted. The entrance of these men into the prison at Bourg was almost a triumph.

The case began again; at first with the same results. The four prisoners were sheltered by an alibi, which was false, but signed by at least a hundred signatures, and it could easily have had ten thousand. All preconceived opinions must yield in presence of such testimony. The acquittal seemed certain, when the judge put a question, perhaps unconsciously insidious, which changed the whole face of things.

"Madame," he said, to the lady who had been so kindly assisted by one of the robbers, "which one of these men was it who paid you those attentions?"

This unexpected form of inquiry upset her ideas. It is possible that she thought the guilt proved and saw a means of modifying the sentence of the man who interested her.

"That one," she replied, pointing to Leprêtre.

The four prisoners, who were all included in the one alibi, fell by this one stroke under the axe of the executioner. They rose and bowed to the lady, smiling.

"Ha, captain," cried Hyvert, falling back on his bench with a shout of laughter, "that will teach you to play the gallant!"

I have heard that the unhappy lady died of grief not long after.

The usual appeal was taken, but this time there was little hope in it. The Revolutionary party, which Napoleon was destined to crush a month later, was now in the ascendant. That of the Counter-Revolution was disgraced by odious excesses. Examples were wanted; they were even reckoned on; for governments are like men, the weakest are often the most severe. The Companies of Jehu had no longer a consolidated existence. The heroes of those savage bands, Debauce, Hastier, Bary, Le Coq, Dabri, Delboulbe, Storkenfeld, had fallen either on the scaffold or beside it. There were no longer any chances of escape for those condemned in the daring courage of their defeated folly; they were not even capable of defending their own lives, which they coolly took themselves, like Piard, at the end of a gay dinner, to spare justice or vengeance the trouble. So our brigands were doomed to die.

Their appeal was rejected; but the judicial authorities were not the first to know it. Three shots fired under the walls of the prison informed the condemned men. The commissioner of the executive Directory, alarmed by this symptom of connivance, called out a part of the armed force of which my uncle was then the commander. At six-o'clock in the morning sixty horsemen were drawn up before the gate of the prison-yard.

Though the jailers had taken every possible precaution to prevent access to the prisoners, whom they had left the night before pinioned and chained, they found them in the morning unbound and armed to the teeth, and were wholly unable to make a long resistance. The four prisoners went out without difficulty, after locking up their keepers and bolting all the doors. Then, furnished with the keys, they easily crossed the prison space which divided them from the yard. Their appearance must have been terrifying to the populace, which awaited them before the iron gates. To preserve their freedom of movement, possibly to affect a security more threatening even than

the fame of their strength and intrepidity, perhaps to hide the flow of blood which would redden white linen and betray the presence of a death-wound, they were all four bare to the waist. Their braces crossed upon the chest, their broad red sashes bristling with weapons, their shouts of attack and fury, — all these things must have given an almost fantastic character to the scene. When they reached the yard they saw the gendarmerie drawn up, motionless, in a line impossible to break or avoid. They stopped for a moment and seemed to be conferring together. Leprêtre, who was, as I have said, their elder and their chief, waved his hand to the guard and said, with the graceful dignity that was peculiar to him:

“Very good, gentlemen of the gendarmerie!”

Then he passed in front of his comrades, bade them an ardent last farewell, and blew out his brains. Guyon, Amiet, and Hyvert took an attitude of defence, pointing their weapons at the armed force. They did not fire; but the gendarmes regarded their attitude as hostile and fired a volley. Guyon fell dead on the body of Leprêtre, which had not moved. Amiet had his thigh broken near the groin. The “*Biographie des Contemporains*” says that he was executed. I have myself often heard it said that he died at the foot of the scaffold. Hyvert was left alone, his face calm, his eye terrible, a pistol in each vigorous and practised hand. Perhaps it was admiration for the attitude at bay of that fine young man with floating hair, who was known to have never taken life and from whom the law now exacted the penalty of blood, or perhaps it was the sight of those bodies over which he bounded like a wolf overtaken by the hunters, or merely the frightful novelty of the scene, but for a moment the troops were motionless. Hyvert saw it, and offered a compromise.

“Gentlemen,” he said, “death, so be it! I am glad of it! I die with all my heart! But, let no one approach me, or I shoot him — except that man,” he added, pointing to the executioner. “This is an affair between him and me; let no one meddle.”

The concession was an easy one; for all present suffered at the prolongation of this horrible tragedy and were eager to have it over. When Hyvert saw that consent was given, he took one of his pistols between his teeth and with the hand thus freed he pulled a dagger from his belt and plunged it to the hilt into his breast. He remained standing and seemed astonished. They attempted to rush upon him.

“Stop, gentlemen!” he cried again, pointing his pistols at the gendarmes, while the blood flowed in great waves from the wound where the dagger was sticking. “Keep to the agreement; I will die alone, or three of us shall die. Forward!”

They let him do as he would. He went straight to the scaffold, turning the weapon in the wound.

“My soul must be riveted to my body !” he cried, “for I cannot die. Here, you ! see if you can tear it out !”

This to the executioner.

A moment more and his head fell. Whether by accident or through some peculiar phenomenon of vitality, it rebounded and then rolled clear of the scaffold. People will still tell you in Bourg that Hyvert’s head spoke.

I had not finished reading these words of Nodier’s before I resolved to lay aside my “René d’Argonne” and take up the “Company of Jehu.”

The next day I came down with my carpet-bag in my hand.

“Are you going away ?” said Alexandre.

“Yes.”

“Where are you going ?”

“To Bourg in Bresse.”

“What are you going to do there ?”

“Visit localities, and consult the memories of all the inhabitants who saw the execution of Leprière, Guyon, Amiet, and Hyvert.”

Two roads lead to Bourg — coming from Paris, I mean ; you can either leave the railway at Mâcon and take a diligence which goes from Mâcon to Bourg, or you can continue on to Lyon and take the railway between Bourg and Lyon. I was hesitating between the two routes when my mind was determined by a traveller who went a short distance in the same carriage with me. He was going to Bourg, where, he told me, he had frequent business ; he was going by Lyon ; consequently that must be the best way. I resolved to take it. I slept at Lyon, and the next day, by ten o’clock in the morning, I was at Bourg.

A newspaper printed in the second capital of the kingdom met me. It contained a sour article about me.

Lyon has never forgiven me, I believe, since 1833, and

that is now twenty-four years ago, for having said that it was not literary. Alas! I am, in 1857, of the same opinion still. I do not change my opinions easily.

There is another town in France which dislikes me almost as much as Lyon; and that is Rouen. Rouen has hissed all my plays, including "Comte Hermann." One day a Neapolitan boasted to me of having hissed Rossini and Malibran, "The Barbieri," and Desdemona. "That must be true," I answered, "because Rossini and Malibran boast, on their side, of having been hissed by the Neapolitans." So I boast of being hissed by the Rouenese. But once when I chanced to have a native-born Rouen man under my hand I resolved to find out why they hissed me in Rouen. Why not? I like to know everything, even trifles. The Rouen man replied: "We hiss you because we object to you." Why should n't they object to me? They objected to Joan of Arc. However, it could not be for the same reason, so I asked the Rouen man why he and his compatriots objected to me; I had never spoken ill of apple-sugar; I had been respectful to Monsieur Barbet all the time he was mayor, and in my capacity as delegate from the Society of Men of Letters to the inauguration of the statue of Corneille, I was the only man who thought of bowing to him before beginning my speech. There certainly was nothing in all that to draw down upon me the hatred of the Rouenese.

So to this haughty reply, "We hiss you because we object to you," I answered humbly, "Good God! why do you object to me?" "Oh, you know very well," replied the Rouen man. "I?" said I. "Yes, you." "Well, never mind, behave as if I didn't know, and tell me." "You remember that dinner that the town gave you on the inauguration of the statue of Corneille?" "Perfectly. Are they angry because I did not return it?" "No, that is not it." "What is it, then?" "Well, at that dinner they said to you: 'Monsieur Dumas, you ought to write a play for the town of Rouen, on a subject drawn from its

own history,'” “To which I replied: ‘Nothing easier; I will come, whenever you send for me, and spend a fortnight in Rouen. You can give me a subject and during those fifteen days I’ll write the play, and the profits shall go to the poor of the town.’” “That is true; you did say all that.” “I don’t see anything so wounding in that, to bring the hatred of the whole town upon me.” “But when they added, ‘Will you write it in prose?’ what did you answer?” “Faith, I forget.” “You answered, ‘I will write it in verse, for that is soonest done.’” “Very likely.” “Well?” “Well, what?” “What? why, it was an insult to Corneille, monsieur; that is why the Rouenese object to you, and will object to you for a long time to come.”

This is literally true. Oh, most worthy Rouenese! I trust you will never do me the ill-turn of forgiving me and applauding me.

The journal I spoke of said that M. Dumas had only passed one night at Lyon, doubtless because a town that was not literary was unworthy to detain him longer. M. Dumas had, in fact, not thought of that at all, being in a hurry to get to Bourg; and no sooner had he arrived at the latter place than he asked to be shown to the office of the leading journal.

I knew that this paper was edited by a distinguished archæologist, who was also the editor of my friend Baux’s book on the church at Brou. I asked for M. Milliet; M. Milliet came. We shook hands, and I explained the object of my journey.

“I can put you in the way of what you want,” said he. “I will take you to one of our magistrates, who is writing the history of the province.”

“But what period in your history?”

“He has just got down to 1822.”

“Then that’s all right. The events I want to relate date from 1799, and my heroes were executed in 1800; he has already passed that epoch and can give me every information. Let us go and see the magistrate.”

On the way, Monsieur Milliet told me that this same magistrate was a distinguished *gourmet*. Ever since Brillat-Savarin's day it is the fashion for magistrates to be *gourmets*. Unfortunately, many are contented to be *gourmands*, — which is not at all the same thing.

We were introduced into the magistrate's study. I saw a man with a shiny face and a jeering smile. He received me with that patronizing manner which historians deign to bestow on poets.

"Well, monsieur," he said, "you have come to look up subjects for novels in this poor region?"

"No, monsieur, my subject is found; I have come to consult historical documents about it."

"Good; I did not know it was necessary to give yourself so much trouble in order to write novels."

"You are mistaken, monsieur,— at any rate so far as I am concerned. I am in the habit of making very careful researches about the historical subjects of which I write."

"You might have sent some one here."

"Whoever I sent, not being absorbed in my subject, would pass over the most important facts without observing them. Besides, I make much use of localities, and I cannot describe them unless I see them."

"Then you mean to write the novel yourself?"

"Well, yes, monsieur. My last book was written by my valet; but it had such a great success that the scamp asked me higher wages,— such exorbitant ones, in fact, that, to my great regret, I had to part with him."

The magistrate bit his lips. Then, after a moment, he said: —

"Will you please inform me, monsieur, in what way I can assist your important work?"

"You can direct my researches, monsieur; as you have written a history of the department none of the leading events which took place in its chief town can be unknown to you."

"You are right, monsieur; I believe I am well informed on all points."

“Well then, monsieur, in the first place your department was the centre of the operations of The Company of Jehu.”

“Monsieur, I have heard of The Company of Jesus,” answered the magistrate, with his jeering smile.

“The Jesuits you mean, don't you? That is not what I am after.”

“And not what I meant either. I alluded to the robbers of stage-coaches who infested the high-roads from 1797 to 1800.”

“Well, monsieur, allow me to say that they are the very ones I came to Bourg to inquire about; they were called The Company of Jehu, not The Company of Jesus.”

“What is the meaning of that title, The Company of Jehu? I like to get at the bottom of things.”

“So do I, monsieur; that is why I do not confound highwaymen with apostles.”

“It would certainly not be orthodox.”

“But it is what you would have done, monsieur, if I had not come here expressly to correct your mistake, — I, a poet, you, an historian!”

“I await your explanation, monsieur,” resumed the magistrate, pursing his lips.

“It is short and simple. Jehu was a king of Israel, anointed by Elisha to exterminate the house of Ahab. Elisha was Louis XVIII.; Jehu was Georges Cadoudal; the house of Ahab, the Revolution. That was why the plunderers of the mail-coaches who took the government money to support the war in La Vendée called themselves The Company of Jehu.”

“Monsieur, I am happy to learn something at my age.”

“Oh! monsieur, one can always learn, at any age; during life we learn man, in death we learn God.”

“But,” said the magistrate, with an impatient gesture, “may I be told in what way I can serve you?”

“Thus: Four of these young men, leaders among The Company of Jehu, were executed at Bourg, on the place du Bastion —”

“In the first place, monsieur, they do not execute on the place du Bastion; they execute on the Fair grounds.”

“Now they do, monsieur,—for the last fifteen or twenty years, since Peytel,—but before that, and especially during the Revolution, they executed prisoners on the place du Bastion.”

“Possibly.”

“Undoubtedly. These four young men were named Leprêtre, Guyon, Amiet, and Hyvert.”

“I never heard those names.”

“And yet they made a good deal of noise at the time, especially at Bourg.”

“Are you sure, monsieur, that those men were executed here?”

“Quite sure.”

“Where did you get your information?”

“From a man whose uncle, then in command of the gendarmerie, was present at the execution.”

“Who was that?”

“Charles Nodier.”

“Charles Nodier, the poet, the romance-writer?”

“If he had been an historian, monsieur, I would not insist on his facts. I discovered lately, in a visit I made to Varennes, the sort of reliance to be placed on historians. But precisely because he is a poet and a romance-writer I do rely upon Nodier’s facts.”

“You are at liberty to do so. But I know nothing of what you desire to learn; I even venture to suggest that if you have come to Bourg only to get information about the execution of Messieurs — What were their names?”

“Guyon, Leprêtre, Amiet, and Hyvert.”

“—you have made a useless journey. For the last twenty years, monsieur, I have been searching the archives of this town, and I have seen nothing at all relating to any such matter.”

“The archives of the town, monsieur, are not those of the record-office; perhaps I shall be able to find what I want in the record-office.”

"Ah, monsieur, if you can find anything in that office you'll be a clever man; the records there are chaos, positively chaos; you would have to stay here a month and even then — even then —"

"I expect to stay only one day, monsieur; but if in that one day I discover what I want may I be permitted to impart it to you?"

"Yes, monsieur, yes, yes; and you will do me a great service."

"Not greater than that I came to ask of you; I shall tell you something you did not know, that is all."

You can imagine that on leaving the magistrate my sense of honor was piqued; I determined, cost what it might, to get that information about The Company of Jehu. I went after Milliet and fairly cornered him.

"Well," said he, "my wife's brother is a lawyer."

"He's my man. Let us go and find him."

"He is in court at this hour."

"Let us go to court."

"But your appearance will create an excitement, I warn you."

"Then go alone; tell him what the question is, and ask him to make a search. As for me, I shall go and look about the environs of the town so as to base my work on the localities. I will meet you, if you are willing, at half-past four on the place du Bastion."

"Certainly."

"I think I saw a forest as I came along?"

"The forest of Seillon."

"Bravo!"

"You want a forest?"

"It is indispensable to me."

"Then permit me to —"

"What?"

"— take you to a friend of mine, M. Leduc, a poet, who in his off moments is an inspector."

“Inspector of what?”

“Forests.”

“I suppose there are no ruins in the forest?”

“There is a Chartreuse, which is not exactly in the forest, but is only a few hundred feet from it.”

“But in the forest?”

“There is a sort of hermitage which they call La Correrie, belonging to the Chartreuse, with which it communicates by an underground passage.”

“Good! Now if you can provide me with a grotto, you will satisfy my aspirations.”

“There’s the grotto of Ceyzeriat, but that is on the other side of the Reissouse.”

“I don’t mind that. If the grotto won’t come to me I must do as Mohammed did, go to the grotto. Meantime let us go and find M. Leduc.”

Five minutes later we were at M. Leduc’s. Finding what the matter was, he instantly put himself, his horse, and carriage at my disposal. I accepted everything. There are men who offer kindnesses in a way to put you immediately at your ease. We went first to the Chartreuse. If I had built it myself it could not have suited my purpose better. A lonely cloister, a tangled garden, inhabitants that were almost savages. Chance, I thank thee!

From there we went to La Correrie; it was the supplement of the Chartreuse. I did not yet know what I could make of it; but it would evidently be very useful.

“Now, monsieur,” I said to my obliging conductor, “I want some pretty site, rather gloomy, under tall trees, beside a river. Have you such a thing in these parts?”

“What do you want it for?”

“To build a château on it.”

“What sort of château?”

“Of cards, bless you! I have a family to house: a model mother, a melancholy young girl, a frolicsome boy, and a poaching gardener.”

“There is a spot we call Les Noires-Fontaines.”

"That is a charming name."

"But there is no *château* on it."

"So much the better, for I should have had to pull it down."

"Let us go to the Noires-Fontaines."

We started; a quarter of an hour later we left the carriage near the ranger's house.

"We will take this wood-path," said M. Leduc, "it will bring us out where we want to go."

It led in fact to an open spot planted with tall trees which overshadowed three or four pools of water.

"This is what we call the Noires-Fontaines," said M. Leduc.

"And here will live Madame de Montrevel, Amélie, and little Édouard. Now, what are those villages I see over there?"

"The nearest is Montagnac; the one farther off, on the mountain, is Ceyzeriat."

"Is that where there is a grotto?"

"Yes; how did you know there was a grotto?"

"Never mind; go on, — the names of those other villages, please?"

"Saint-Just, Tréconnas, Ramasse, Villereversure."

"That will do."

"Have you enough?"

"Yes."

I took my note-book and made a plan of the locality, and wrote the names of the villages about in the places where M. Leduc had pointed them out to me.

"That's done," said I.

"Which way shall we go now?"

"The church of Brou must be somewhere about here?"

"Yes."

"Then let us go to the church of Brou."

"Do you want that in your novel?"

"Of course; you don't suppose that I should put my scene in a region which contains the architectural master-

piece of the sixteenth century without utilizing that masterpiece, do you ? ”

“ Let us go to the church at Brou.”

Twenty minutes later the sexton showed us into that granite jewel-case, which contains the marble gems called the tombs of Marguerite of Austria, Marguerite de Bourbon, and Philibert le Beau.

“ How happened it,” I asked the sexton, “ that all these treasures were not reduced to powder during the Revolution ? ”

“ Ah ! monsieur, the municipality had an idea.”

“ What was that ? ”

“ They turned the church into a store-house for forage.”

“ Yes, yes, and the hay saved the marble ; you are right, my friend, that was an idea indeed ! ”

“ Does the idea of the municipality afford you another ? ” asked Monsieur Leduc.

“ Faith, yes ; and I shall have poor luck if I don’t make something of it.”

I looked at my watch.

“ Three o’clock ! let us go to the prison ; I have an appointment at four with M. Milliet on the place du Bastion.”

“ Wait a moment,” said M. Leduc, “ there is one thing more.”

“ What is that ? ”

“ Did you notice the motto of Marguerite of Austria ? ”

“ No ; where is it ? ”

“ In various places ; but see there, above her tomb.”

“ ‘ *Fortune, infortune, fort ’une.* ’ ”

“ Precisely.”

“ Well, it is a play on words ; what does it mean ? ”

“ Learned men say it means : ‘ Fate persecutes a woman. ’ ”

“ Let ’s see about that.”

“ In the first place, we must suppose the motto to be derived from the Latin.”

“ True, it probably was.”

“Well, then: *Fortuna infortunat* —”

“Oh, oh! *infortunat* — that is something of a solecism. Explain it.”

“Explain it yourself.”

“What do you say to this: ‘*Fortuna, infortuna, forti una,*’ ‘Fortune and misfortune are the same to the strong’?”

“Do you know, that may really be the true meaning.”

“Bless me! that’s what it is not to be a learned man, my good friend; we use our faculties, and faculties see clearer than science. Have you anything else to tell me?”

“No.”

“Then let us go to the prison.”

We got into the carriage and returned to town, where we stopped at the gate of the prison. I put my head out of the window.

“Oh! they’ve spoilt it!” I cried out.

“Spoilt what?”

“It certainly was not like that in the days of *my* prisoners. Can I speak to the jailer?”

“Of course.”

We knocked at the door. A man of about forty opened it. He recognized M. Leduc.

“My dear fellow,” said M. Leduc, pointing me out, “this is a learned friend of mine —”

“Come, no nonsense!” I exclaimed, interrupting him.

“— who declares,” went on M. Leduc, “that the prison is not the same as it was in the last century.”

“That is true, Monsieur Leduc; it was pulled down and rebuilt in 1816.”

“Then the interior arrangements are not the same?” said I.

“Oh, no, monsieur; they are all changed.”

“Could I see a plan of the old prison?”

“Monsieur Martin, the architect, might be able to show you one.”

“Is he any relation to Monsieur Martin, the lawyer?”

“His brother.”

"Very good; then I can get the plan."

"If that is the case, we have nothing more to do here," remarked M. Leduc.

"Nothing."

"Can I leave you, then?"

"I shall be sorry to part with you, but I need nothing more."

"Shall I show you the way to the place du Bastion?"

"No, it is close by."

"What are you going to do this evening?"

"I will spend it with you, if you will allow me."

"Delighted: at nine o'clock a cup of tea will await you."

"I shall come for it."

I thanked M. Leduc; we shook hands and parted. I walked along the rue des Lisses (meaning Lists, from a combat which took place on the ground to which it leads), and then, skirting the Montburon garden, I reached the place du Bastion. This is a half-circle now used for the market-place of the town. In the middle of it stands the statue of Bichat, by David d'Angers, — Bichat in a frock-coat (why that exaggeration of realism?), laying his hand on the heart of a child about ten years of age, perfectly naked (why that excess of ideality?); extended at Bichat's feet lies a dead body. It is Bichat's book "Of Life and of Death" translated into bronze. I was standing looking at this statue, which exhibits both the merits and the defects of David d'Angers, when some one touched me on the shoulder. I looked round; it was M. Milliet. He held a paper in his hand.

"Well?" I asked.

"Well!" he replied, "victory!"

"What is that you have there?"

"The procès-verbal of the execution."

"Whose execution?"

"That of your four men."

"Guyon, Leprêtre, Amiet —"

"And Hyvert."

“ Give it to me.”

“ Here it is.”

I took it and read : —

PROCÈS-VERBAL OF DEATH AND EXECUTION OF LAURENT GUYON, ÉTIENNE HYVERT, FRANÇOIS AMIET, ANTOINE LEPRÊTRE. Condemned to death, 20th Thermidor, year VIII., executed 23d Vendémiaire, year IX.

This day, 23d Vendémiaire, year IX., the government commissioner to the court at Bourg, having received, at eleven o'clock at night, a despatch from the minister of justice, containing the trial and judgment which condemned to death Laurent Guyon, Étienne Hyvert, François Amiet, and Antoine Leprêtre, also the judgment of the court of appeals of the 6th instant, which rejects the appeal against the judgment of the 21st Thermidor, year VIII., did notify, by letter, between seven and eight o'clock the next morning, the four condemned men that their sentence would be executed this day at eleven o'clock. In the interval that elapsed before eleven o'clock the four accused persons shot and stabbed themselves in prison. Leprêtre and Guyon, rumor says, were dead; Hyvert mortally wounded and dying; Amiet mortally wounded but still conscious. All four, being in that state, were carried upon the scaffold, and, living or dead, were guillotined; at eleven and a half o'clock the sheriff Colin brought the procès-verbal of their execution to the Municipality, for the purpose of registering the deaths of these men.

The captain of gendarmerie then turned over to the justice of the peace the procès-verbal of what happened in the prison prior to the execution, of which he had been a witness. As for me, I was not present, but I certify to what I have learned from hearsay.

(Signed)

DUBOST, clerk of the court.

Bourg, 23d Vendémiaire, year IX.

Ah! so it was the poet that was right, and not the historian! The captain of gendarmerie who had turned over to the justice of the peace the procès-verbal of what had happened in the prison, *at which he was present*, was Nodier's uncle. This procès-verbal thus handed over to the justice of peace was identical with the account engraven on the mind of the nephew, who, forty years later, gave it to

the world, unaltered, in that masterpiece of his, entitled "Souvenirs de la Révolution." The whole series of papers was in the record-office. M. Martin offered to have copies made of them, — inquiry, procès-verbaux, and judgment. I had the "Souvenirs de la Révolution" in my pocket; I held in my hand the procès-verbal of execution, which confirmed every fact that Nodier had recorded.

"Let us go to the magistrate," I said to M. Milliet.

"Let us go to the magistrate," he repeated.

The magistrate was confounded; I left him convinced that poets know history as well as historians, — if not better.

ALEX DUMAS.

PROLOGUE.

THE TOWN OF AVIGNON.

WE do not know if the prologue we are about to present to our readers is very useful, but we are unable to resist the desire to make it, not the first chapter, but the preface to this book.

The more we advance in life and the more we advance in art, the more convinced we are that nothing is abrupt and isolated, that nature and society move by evolution and not by chance, and that each event which unfolds itself to-day before our eyes, be it a sad or joyous flower, fragrant or fetid, beneficent or fatal, was sown in the past and has its roots in days anterior to ours, just as it will bear its fruits in the future.

Man, when young, takes time as it comes, in love with the joys in hand, indifferent to the morrow. Youth is the springtide, with its dewy dawns and its glorious evenings; if, at times, the storm-clouds gather they mutter and burst and vanish, leaving the heavens bluer, the air purer, nature more smiling than before. What use is there in reflecting on the causes of a storm which passes rapidly like a caprice and is as evanescent as a fancy; before we seize the meaning of the meteorological phenomena the storm has passed.

But it is not so with those other and terrible phenomena which at the close of summer, threaten the harvests; those of the autumn, which imperil the vintage: we must ask whence they come, whither they go, if we would find the means of preventing them.

To the thinker, the historian, the poet, there is far deeper subject for reflection in revolutions, those tempests

of the social atmosphere which drench the earth with blood and destroy a generation of men, than in the storms of the sky which deluge a harvest or ravage a vineyard; the fruits of the earth are the hope of one year only, their loss can be repaired in the coming year — unless the wrath of the Lord be upon us.

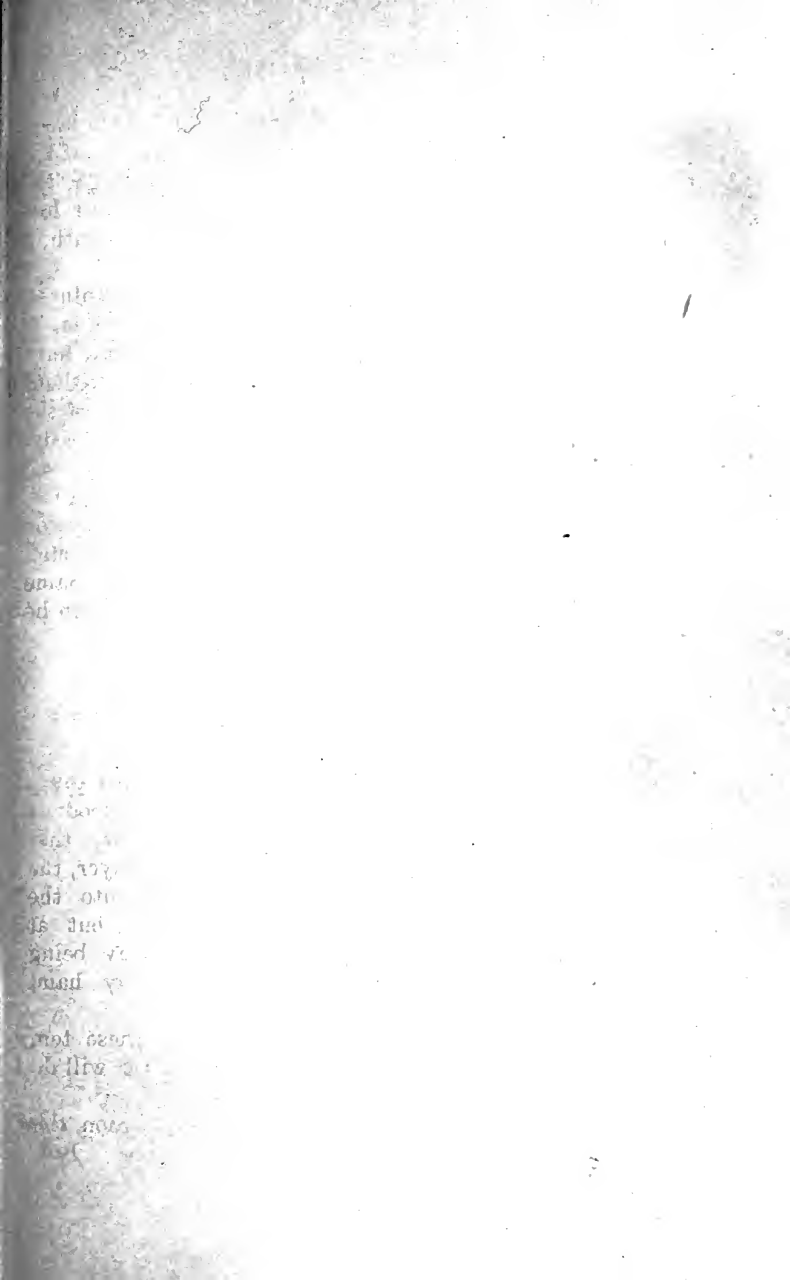
Therefore, in other days, whether from forgetfulness, or carelessness, or ignorance, — for ignorance is bliss, it is fools who are wise, — in other days, I say, I should have related the history I am going to tell you to-day without stopping to describe the place where the first scene of the book occurs. I should have written that scene heedlessly, and passed through the South like any other province, and called Avignon by the name of any town that suited me. But to-day it is not so. I am no longer blown about by the gusts of spring; I have now to do with the storms of summer and the tempests of autumn. To-day when I name Avignon I evoke a spectre; and, like Mark Antony when he held up Cæsar's toga and said, —

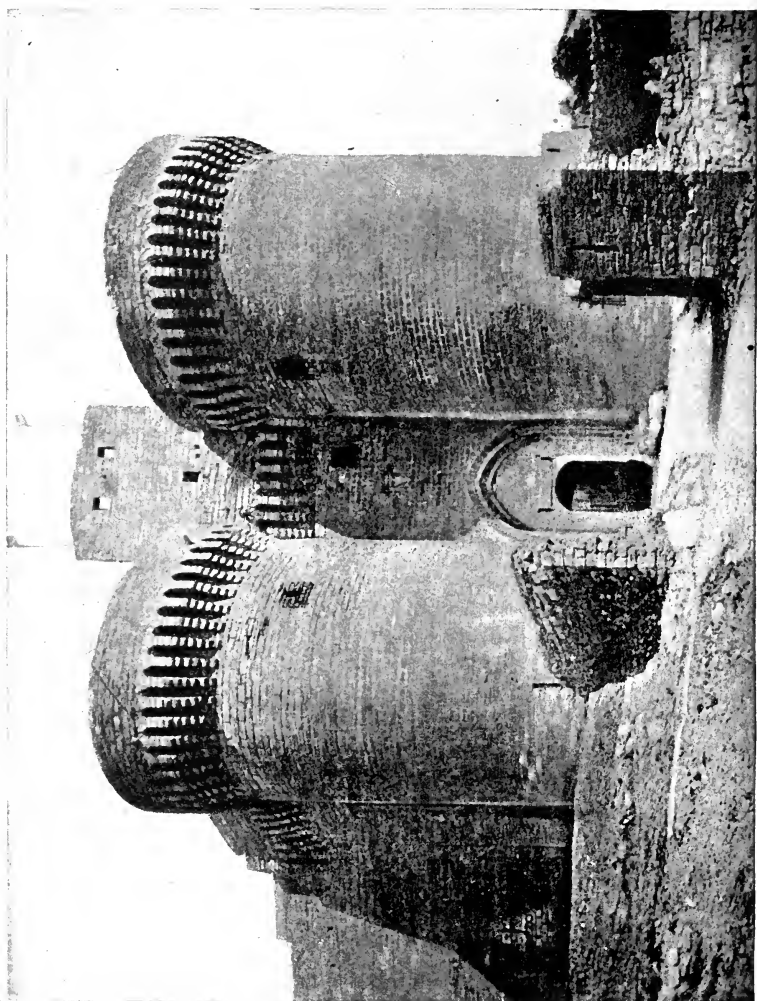
“Look! in this place ran Cassius' dagger through;
See what a rent the envious Casca made;
Through this the well-beloved Brutus stabbed, —”

I say, beholding the sanguinary shroud of the papal town, “Behold the blood of the Albigenes and the blood of the Cevennais; this is the blood of republicans, that the blood of royalists; behold the blood of Lescuyer, the blood of the Maréchal Brune.” Then I fall into the clutches of an awful sadness and I begin to write; but at the very first lines I perceive that, without my being aware of it, the chisel of the historian is in my hand instead of the pen of a romance-writer.

Well, well! let me be both. Reader, grant these ten, fifteen, twenty pages to the historian; the novelist will do the rest.

I shall say, therefore, a few words about Avignon, the place where the first scene of this book opens. But,





perhaps, before reading what I have to say, it may be well for you, my reader, to cast your eyes over what the national historian, François Nouguiet says of it.

“Avignon,” he says, “a town noble for its antiquity, delightful for its site, superb for its walls, smiling for the fertility of its soil, charming for the gentleness of its people, magnificent for its palace, beautiful for its fine streets, marvellous for the construction of its bridge, rich by its commerce, and known to all the world.”

May the shade of François Nouguiet forgive us if we do not see his town with quite the same eyes that he does. Those who know Avignon may decide between the historian and the novelist.

It is proper to say, in the first place, that Avignon is a town by itself,—a town of extreme passions. The period of religious dissensions which have filled her with political hatreds dates back to the twelfth century; the valleys of the Mont Ventoux sheltered, after their flight from Lyon, Pierre de Valdo and his Vaudois, the ancestors of those protestants who, under the name of Albigenes, cost the counts of Toulouse and gave to the papacy the seven castles which Raymond VI. possessed in Languedoc.

Avignon, a powerful republic, governed by podestas, refused to submit to the king of France. One morning Louis VIII.—who thought it an easier thing to make a crusade against Avignon, like Simon de Montfort, than against Jerusalem, like Philip Augustus—one morning, we say, Louis VIII. appeared before the gates of Avignon, demanding admittance, lance in rest, visor down, banners unfurled, and the war-trumpets sounding. The burghers refused. They offered the king, as a last concession, a peaceable entrance, bare-headed, lance erect, and the royal banner alone displayed. Whereupon the king laid siege to the town. The siege lasted three months, during which time, so say the chroniclers, the burghers of Avignon returned to the French soldiers arrow for arrow, wound for wound, death for death.

The town at last capitulated. Louis VIII. was accompanied by the cardinal-legate of Rome, San Angelo; it was he who dictated the terms of surrender, true priestly terms, hard and unconditional. The people of Avignon were condemned to demolish their ramparts, fill up their moats, pull down three hundred towers, give up their ships, and burn all their implements of war. They were also to pay an enormous impost, abjure the Vaudois heresy, and maintain in Palestine thirty men, fully equipped and armed, to assist in the rescue of the Holy Sepulchre. And furthermore, that a watch might be kept over the accomplishment of these conditions (the papal bull can still be seen in the archives of the town), a brotherhood of penitents was founded, which, after a lapse of six centuries, exists at the present time. In opposition to these brethren, who were called the "White Penitents," an order of Black Penitents was founded, inspired with the spirit of the opposition of the counts of Toulouse.

From that day forth religious hatreds became political hatreds. It was not enough that Avignon was a region of heresy, it was now to become the theatre of a schism in the Church.

We must be allowed a short digression on the subject of the French Rome. Strictly speaking, it is not necessary to the drama of which we treat, and perhaps we should do better to spring into the heart of that drama at once; but we hope the reader will pardon us for not doing so. We write especially for those who like to find something in a novel that is other than a novel.

In 1285 Philippe le Bel came to the throne. That is a great historic date. The papacy — which, in the person of Gregory VII., made head against the emperor of Germany, and later, though conquered materially by Henry IV., did, morally, conquer him — the papacy was slapped in the face by a simple Italian gentleman, and the iron gauntlet of the Colonna reddened the cheek of Boniface VIII. But the king of France, by whose hand the blow was really dealt,

what happened to him under the successor of Boniface VIII.?

That successor was Benedict XI., a man of low estate, but one who might have shown himself a man of genius had they given him time. Too feeble to fly in the face of Philippe le Bel, he found a means to assail him which, two hundred years later, would have been the envy of the founder of a celebrated order: he publicly pardoned Colonna. To pardon Colonna was the same as declaring him guilty; guilty men alone need pardon. If Colonna was guilty, so was the king of France. There was certainly some danger in sustaining that argument; and so it happened that Benedict XI. was pope for only eight months. One day a veiled woman who called herself a lay-sister from the convent of Santa-Petronilla at Perugia, presented him, while at dinner, with a basket of figs. Was there an asp in the basket, as there was in Cleopatra's? At any rate on the following day the Holy See was vacant.

Then Philippe le Bel had a very singular idea, so singular that it must have seemed to him at first an hallucination. It was this: to get possession of the Roman papacy, carry it to France, put it in jail and make it coin money for his benefit. The reign of Philippe le Bel was the accession of Gold to its throne. Gold was the one sole God of this king who had slapped a pope's face. Saint Louis took a priest for his minister, the worthy Abbé Suger; Philippe le Bel took two bankers for his ministers, two Florentines, named Biscio and Musiato.

Do you expect, my dear reader, that I am going to fall into the philosophical commonplace of anathematizing gold? Not at all. In the thirteenth century gold meant progress. Till then the soil was the only wealth. Gold was now to be the soil coined, the soil convertible, exchangeable, transportable, divisible, the soil subtilized, spiritualized, if I may say so. As long as the soil was not represented by gold, man, like the god Thermes, that landmark of the fields, had his feet buried in the earth. In former times

the earth bore the man; in these days man shoulders the earth. But gold—gold had to be drawn from where it was; and it was elsewhere than in the mines of Chili or of Mexico. Gold was in the hands of the Jews and the churches. To dig it out of that double mine needed more than a king,—it needed a pope.

That is why Philippe le Bel, the great getter of gold, resolved to have a pope of his own. Benedict XI. being dead, there was a conclave at Perugia; the French cardinals were in a majority. Philippe le Bel cast his eyes on the archbishop of Bordeaux, Bertrand de Got. He made an appointment to meet him in a forest near Saint-Jean d'Angely. Bertrand de Got was careful not to miss that appointment. The king and the archbishop heard mass together, and at the moment when the Host was elevated they bound themselves by the God they glorified to absolute secrecy.

Bertrand de Got was still ignorant of the matter in question. When mass had been heard the king turned to the priest. "Archbishop," he said, "it is in my power to make you pope."

Bertrand de Got, not listening for more, flung himself at the king's feet. "What must I do in return?" he said.

"Six favors which I shall ask of you," responded Philippe le Bel.

"It is for you to command, for me to obey," said the future pope.

That was how the oath of servitude was taken. The king raised the archbishop, kissed him on the lips, and said:—

"The six favors are these: first, that you reconcile me absolutely with the Church, and obtain my pardon for the misdemeanor I committed in regard to Boniface VIII.; second, that you restore to me and mine the right of communion which the court of Rome denied me; third, that you grant me the tithes of the clergy in my kingdom for a period of five years, so as to help me with the costs of the

war in Flanders; fourth, that you destroy and annihilate the memory of Pope Boniface VIII.; fifth, that you restore the rank and dignity of cardinal to Jacopo and Pietro Colonna. The sixth and last favor promised I will reserve now, and tell you of it later, when the time comes."

Bertrand de Got swore to the promises and favors he had heard recited, and also to the promise and favor he had not heard. That which the king did not dare to exact from him at the time was the abolition of the Templars.

In addition to the promise and oath taken on the *corpus Domini*, Bertrand de Got gave his brother and two of his nephews as hostages. The king, on his side, swore that he would have the archbishop elected pope. This scene, which took place at one of the crossways of the forest in the night time, was more like the summons and evocation of a demon by a magician, than a meeting and an alliance between a king and a pope. Consequently, the coronation of the king, which took place soon after at Lyon, when the captivity of the Church began, seemed to be not at all agreeable to God; for just as the royal cortège passed a wall covered with spectators, the structure gave way, the king was wounded, and the Duc de Bretagne killed. The pope was knocked over, and his tiara rolled in the mud!

Bertrand de Got was elected pope, under the name of Clement V. Clement V. kept all the promises of Bertrand de Got. Philippe was absolved; holy communion was restored to him and his; the purple again covered the shoulders of the Colonna; the Church was made to pay for the war in Flanders and also for the crusade of Philippe de Valois against the Greek Empire. The memory of Pope Boniface was, if not destroyed and annihilated, blasted and dishonored. The walls of the Temple were razed, and the Templars burned in the open space on the Pont-Neuf. All these edicts (they were not called bulls now that the temporal power dictated them), all these edicts were dated at Avignon.

Philippe le Bel was the richest king of the French mon-

archy; his treasury was inexhaustible, for his treasury was the pope. He had bought him, and he used him. He put him in the press, and just as wine and cider flow from grapes and apples, so from this crushed pope flowed gold. The pontificate, slapped by Colonna in the person of Boniface VIII., abdicated the empire of the world in that of Clement V.

We have now told how the king by blood and the pope by gold came to be where they were. We know how they departed from the scene. Jacques de Molay from his pyre summoned them both to appear before God within a year. Ἡ τὸ γέρον σιβυλλία, said Aristophanes: "Dying hoary-heads have the souls of sibyls." Clement V. died first. He saw his palace burned in a dream. "From that moment," says Baluze, "he became gloomy and lasted only a short time." Seven months later it was Philippe's turn. Some say he died hunting, knocked over by a wild boar; Dante is among them. "The king," he says, "who was seen beside the Seine coining false money, died from the tusk of a boar." But Guillaume de Nangis makes the royal coiner of base money die a death that was far otherwise providential. "Undermined by some disease unknown to the physicians," says Nangis, "Philippe wasted away, to the great astonishment of everybody; for neither his pulse nor his urine showed any cause of illness nor the imminence of his danger."

The king of uproar, the king of debauchery, Louis X., surnamed le Hutin, succeeded his father, Philippe le Bel. John XXII. was pope in the place of Clement V. Avignon then became a second Rome; John XXII. and Clement VI. anointed her queen of luxury. The manners and customs of the time made her the sovereign lady of license and self-indulgence. In place of her towers, pulled down by San Angelo, Hernandez de Hériedi, grand-master of Saint-John of Jerusalem, girdled her with a belt of walls. Dissolute monks transformed the once blessed precincts of the convents into places of debauchery and luxury; pros-

titutes possessed themselves of the diamonds of the tiara, and wore them in bracelets and necklaces, while the echoes of Vacluse came to her ears bearing the soft melodious strophes of Petrarch.

This lasted until King Charles V., a virtuous and religious monarch, having resolved to put a stop to the scandal, sent the Maréchal de Boucicaut to drive the anti-pope, Benedict XIII., out of Avignon. But when the latter saw the French troops he remembered that before he was pope, under the name of Benedict XIII., he had been a soldier himself and a captain, by the name of Pietro di Luna. For five months he made a strong defence, pointing his engines of war with his own hand from the walls of his castle, and finding them far more murderous than his pontifical thunderbolts. Forced at last to fly, he issued from the town by a postern, after destroying a hundred houses and killing four thousand of the inhabitants of Avignon. He took refuge in Spain, where the king of Arragon offered him sanctuary. There, every morning, from the top of a tower, assisted by two priests who constituted his sacred college, he blessed the world, which was none the better for it, and cursed his enemies, who were none the worse. At last, finding that he was about to die, and fearing that the schism in the Church would die with him, he made his two vicars cardinals, on condition that as soon as he was dead one of them would elect the other pope. This was done. The new pope continued the schism for a short time, supported by the cardinal who had proclaimed him; but before long they both negotiated with Rome, made honorable amends, and returned to the bosom of the true Church, one as archbishop of Seville, the other as archbishop of Toledo.

From that time until 1790, Avignon, widowed of her popes, had been governed by papal legates and vice-legates. In seventy years seven sovereign pontiffs had resided within her walls; she had seven hospitals, seven fraternities of penitents, seven convents of men, seven

convents of women, seven parishes, seven cemeteries. To those who know Avignon there was at this time, and there still are, two towns in the town,—the town of the priests, the Roman town; the town of the merchants, the French town: the town of the priests, with its papal palace, its hundred churches, its innumerable bell-towers, always ready to sound the tocsin of conflagration, the knell of slaughter; and the town of the merchants, with its Rhone, its silk-weavers, its crossways going from north to south, and from west to east, from Lyon to Marseille, from Nîmes to Turin; the French town, the cursed town, anxious to have a king, eager to obtain its freedom, and quivering under a sense of slavery, — slavery to priests, vassalage to clergy who were the lords.

The clergy, — not the pious priests, tolerant, austere in their duty and charitable, living in the world to console and edify it, but never mingling in its joys or its passions, — the clergy, we mean, such as ambition, intrigues, and greed had made them; that is to say, the court abbés, rivalling the Roman abbés, lazy, libertine, elegant, bold, kings of fashion, autocrats of society, kissing the hands of ladies of whom they boasted themselves the lovers, and giving their own hands to be kissed by the women of the people whom they honored by making them their mistresses. Do you want a type of such priests? Take the Abbé Maury. Proud as a duke, insolent as a lackey, the son of a shoemaker, but more aristocratic than the son of a great lord.

It is easy to understand that these two classes of inhabitants, representing, one heresy, the other orthodoxy; one the French party, the other the Roman party; one the party of absolute monarchy, the other the party of constitutional progress, — were not elements of peace and security in the old pontifical town; it is easy, we say, to understand how it was that when the Revolution broke forth in Paris and showed itself by the taking of the Bastille, the two parties in Avignon, still hot from the religious wars,

under Louis XIV., did not remain inert in each other's presence.

We have said that Avignon was a town of priests; let us add, a town of hatreds. There are no better places to learn to hate than religious communities. The heart of the child, elsewhere pure of evil passions, is there born full of paternal hatreds bequeathed from father to son for eight centuries; and when at the close of a hating life that child departs he bequeaths the diabolical inheritance to his children. So, when the first cry of liberty resounded through France, the French town of Avignon arose in joy and hope. The moment had come at last to protest aloud against her sale *in æternum* to the hardest and most exacting of masters, the Roman pontiff. All France was about to unite on the Champ-de-Mars in the great fraternal embrace of the Federation. Was she not France? Were they not Frenchmen? They appointed delegates; these delegates went to the legate, and asked him respectfully to leave the town, giving him twenty-four hours in which to do so.

During the night the papists amused themselves by hanging from a gibbet a stuffed figure wearing the tri-color cockade.

Men have changed the course of the Rhone, they turn the precipitous Durance into a canal, they build dykes and arrest the angry torrents which, as the snows melt, come rushing in liquid avalanches from the summit of Mont Ventoux; but what shall stay this mighty flood, this living flood, this human torrent, which, bursting its bonds, rushed, leaping, through the streets of Avignon? God himself put forth no hand to stay it.

Catching sight of the stuffed figure, with the national colors, swinging at the end of a rope, the French town rose from its foundations with cries of rage. Four papists, suspected of the deed, — two nobles, one burgher and a workman, — were dragged from their homes and hanged beside the image. This was the 11th of June, 1793.

The whole French town wrote to the National Assembly that she gave herself to France, and with her, her Rhone, her commerce, the South, and half Provence. The National Assembly was in one of its periods of reaction; it did not wish to quarrel with the pope, it was keeping up appearances with the king. It delayed an answer. From that moment the rising in Angoulême became a revolt; and the pope was free to do with Avignon what the court would have done with Paris after the taking of the Bastille, if the Assembly had delayed the proclamation of the Rights of man. The pope ordered all that had been done in Comtat-Venaissin to be annulled. The privileges of the nobles and clergy were re-established, and the Inquisition was revived in all its severity.

These pontifical decrees were affixed to the walls. One man, alone, in open day, in the face of the whole town, dared go straight to the wall and tear down the decree. His name was Lescuyer. He was not a young man; it was not the fire of youth that impelled him. No; he was almost an old man, and did not belong to the town. He was a Frenchman, from Picardy, ardent, yet reflective, — a former notary settled for some time past in Avignon.

His act was a crime all Roman Avignon remembered. It was so great that the Virgin wept!

You see Avignon is another Italy. She must have miracles at any price; and if God does not perform them there is always some one at hand to invent them. Moreover, a miracle must be a miracle about the Virgin. The Virgin belongs to Italy, that land of poesy, — *La Madonna*. All the mind, the heart, the language of Italians are full of those two words.

It was in the Church of the Franciscans that the miracle took place. The crowd rushed there. It was, indeed, a great thing to see the Virgin weep; but a rumor was spread at the same time, which brought the excitement to a height. A large coffer, tightly closed, had been carried through the town. It roused the curiosity of every one.

What did it contain? Two hours later the coffer was forgotten; for it now said that eighteen trunks were seen going towards the Rhone. As for their contents, that was revealed by a porter. They were articles from the Mont-de-piété, which the French party were taking with them into exile. Pawned articles were, of course, the property of the poor, whom these men were robbing. The poorer the town is, the richer is the Mont-de-piété. Few Monts-de-piété were richer than that at Avignon. It was a theft, an infamous theft!

Whites and Reds, papists and Republicans, rushed together to the Church of the Franciscans, crying out that the municipality must give an account of their proceedings. Lescuyer was the secretary of the municipality. His name was flung to the crowd, not for having torn down the pontifical decrees, — for that the populace would have applauded him, — but for having signed the order to the keeper of the Mont-de-piété to give up the articles in pawn.

Four men were despatched to seize Lescuyer and bring him to the church. He was found in the street, on his way to the municipality. The four men sprang upon him and dragged him to the church with ferocious cries. When they reached it Lescuyer saw, from the flaming eyes that met him, the clenched fists that threatened him, the shouts that demanded his life, — Lescuyer saw that instead of entering the House of the Lord, he was in a circle of hell forgotten by Dante. The only idea he could form as to this sudden hatred was that it came from his tearing down the pontifical posters. He rushed into the pulpit, and in the voice of a man who not only does not blame himself, but who is ready to do the thing over again, he said: —

“Brothers! I think the revolution necessary; I have, therefore, done all in my power — ”

The fanatical Roman party saw that if Lescuyer explained, Lescuyer was saved. That was not what they

wanted; they wanted a victim. So they flung themselves upon him, they tore him from the pulpit, and thrust him into the midst of the howling mob, which dragged him to the altar, uttering that dreadful species of cry, which resembles partly the hissing of a snake, and partly the roar of a tiger, — that murderous *zou, zou!* peculiar to the populace of Avignon.

Lescuyer recognized that fatal cry; he tried to gain refuge at the foot of the altar. He gained none; he fell there. A workman, carrying a stick, struck him so violent a blow on the head that the stick broke in two. Then the crowd hurled itself on that poor body, and with the mixture of ferocity and gayety peculiar to Southern peoples, the men began to dance on his stomach, singing; and the women, crying out that he should expiate his blasphemies against the pope, cut his lips, or rather, they scalloped his lips with their scissiors.

And out of this hideous group arose a cry, a groan; and that death-groan said, "In the name of Heaven! in the name of the Virgin! in the name of humanity! kill me at once!"

The cry was heard; and instantly by common consent the murderers stood aside. They left the wretched man lying there bloody, disfigured, gashed, to die slowly. Five hours this lasted, during which, amid shouts of laughter, insults, jeers from the crowd, that poor body lay there palpitating on the steps of the altar. That is how they kill men in Avignon.

But stay; there is still another way.

A man of the French party had a sudden idea, which told him to go to the *Mant-de-piété*, and get information. There he found everything in order; not a fork nor a spoon had been removed. So, then, it was not as an accomplice in robbing the people that Lescuyer had been so cruelly murdered. It was for being a patriot!

There was, at this time, in Avignon, a man who controlled the populace. All those terrible leaders of the

South of France have obtained such fatal celebrity that it suffices to name them. Everybody, even the least educated person, knows them. This man was Jourdan. Liar and braggart, he had made the ignorant populace believe that it was he who had cut the throat of the governor of the Bastille. So they called him Jourdan Coup-tête. It was not his real name, which was Mathieu Jouve. Neither was he a Provençal; he came from Puy-en-Velay. He had first been a muleteer on those rough heights which surround his native town; then a soldier, who never went to the wars, or the wars might have made him more human; after that, he kept a drinking-shop in Paris. In Avignon he sold the product of the country, madder.

This man collected three hundred followers, seized the gates of the town, left half his troop to guard them, and marched with the rest upon the church of the Franciscans, preceded by two pieces of cannon. These he stationed in front of the church and fired them into it at random. Lescuyer's murderers fled like a flock of frightened birds, leaving some of their number dead on the church steps. Jourdan and his men tramped over the bodies and entered the church. No one was there but the Virgin and the wretched Lescuyer, still breathing. Jourdan and his comrades were careful not to put him out of his misery; his death-agony was to serve their ends, as a means of exciting the mob. They picked up that remnant of a living being, three-quarters dead, and bore it along, bleeding, quivering, gasping in death.

Every one fled from the sight, closing doors and windows. At the end of an hour Jourdan and his three hundred men were masters of the town. Lescuyer was dead; but what of that? They no longer needed his agony. Jourdan profited by the terror he had inspired, and arrested, or caused to be arrested, eighty-four persons, murderers, or so-called murderers, of Lescuyer. Thirty of them had probably never set foot in the church. But when you have a good opportunity to make away with

your enemies, you ought to profit by it; such luck is rare. These eighty persons were huddled together into the Trouillas tower. The proper historical name of the place is the Tour de la Glacière. Why did they change it to the Tour Trouillas? The word is unclean, and suits the horrid deed that was now to be performed there.

This tower had been the scene of the tortures of the Inquisition. Still to be seen on the walls is the greasy soot which rose with the smoke of the wood on which human flesh was burning. They still show you, to-day, the machinery of torture carefully preserved, — the caldron, the oven, the wooden horse, the chains, the dungeons, even the rotten bones. Nothing is wanting.

It was in this tower, built by Clement V., that they now locked up the eighty-four prisoners. But these eighty-four prisoners once locked up became embarrassing. Who was to judge them? There were no legally constituted courts but those of the papacy. Could they kill these men as they had killed Lescuyer?

We have said that a third at least, perhaps half, of the prisoners had not only taken no part in the murders, but had never even set foot in the church. How could they be killed? The killing must have the color of reprisals. But in any case the killing of eighty-four men required a number of executioners. A species of tribunal was improvised by Jourdan, and held its sitting in one of the law-courts. It had a clerk named Raphel, a president, half Italian, half French, an orator in the popular dialect, named Barbe Savournin de la Roua, and three or four other devils, — a baker, a pork-butcher, etc., — whose names are lost in the multitude of events. These were the men who cried out, "We must kill them all; if one escapes, he will be witness against us."

But, as we have said, killers were lacking. There were not more than a handful of men in the courtyard, all belonging to the petty tradesmen and working men of Avignon, — a hair-dresser, a shoemaker, a cobbler, a

mason, an upholsterer, — and they were armed at random; one had a sabre, another a bayonet, a third an iron bar, the fourth a bit of wood, hardened by fire. All these men were chilled by a fine October rain. It was difficult to turn them into assassins. Pooh! nothing is difficult to the devil!

In crises like these there comes an hour when God appears to abandon the earth. Then the devil gets his chance. The devil entered in person the cold and muddy courtyard. He assumed the appearance in face and form of an apothecary named Mendes. He set up a table, lighted by two lanterns; on this table he placed glasses, jugs, pitchers, bottles.

What infernal beverage was poured into those mysterious receptacles of all shapes? No one ever knew; but the result is known. All those who drank that devil's liquor were seized with a fever of fury, a lust of blood and murder. The door was shown to them, and they flung themselves into the dungeon.

The massacre lasted all night. All night the cries, the moans, the death-rattles sounded through the darkness. All were killed, all were slaughtered, — men and women. It was long in doing; the butchers were drunk and ill-armed; but they did it.

Among the butchers was a child, remarked for his bestial cruelty, his immoderate thirst for blood. It was Lescuyer's son. He killed, and killed, and killed again; he boasted of having with his childish hand killed four women and ten men. "I can kill as I like," he said; "I'm not fifteen, and they can't punish me."

As they killed they flung their victims, wounded or dying, dead bodies or living beings, into the pit of the Trouillas tower, sixty feet down. The men were thrown first, the women later. The assassins wanted time to violate those who were young and pretty. At nine in the morning, after twelve hours' massacre, a voice was heard from the depths of that sepulchre: —

“In mercy, kill me! I cannot die.”

A man — it was the armorer Bouffier — leaned over the edge of the pit and looked down. The others dared not.

“Who cried?” they asked.

“It was Lami,” replied Bouffier.

Then, when he returned, they asked him: —

“What did you see down there?”

“A queer marmalade,” he answered; “all pell-mell, — men and women, priests and pretty girls. Enough to make one die of laughing.”

“There’s no denying it, man is a vile being,” said the Comte de Monte-Cristo to M. de Villefort.

Well, it is in that town still reeking with blood, still breathless with these last massacres, that we now introduce two of the principal personages of our history.

I.

A TABLE D'HÔTE.

OCTOBER 9, 1799, on a fine day of that southern autumn which ripens the oranges of Hyères and the grapes of Saint-Péray at the two extremities of Provence, a travelling-carriage, drawn by three post-horses, was crossing at full speed the bridge across the Durance between Cavaillon and Château-Renard, on its way to Avignon, the former papal city, which a decree issued eight years earlier, May 25, 1791, had reunited to France, — a reunion confirmed by the treaty signed at Tolentino, in 1797, between General Bonaparte and Pope Pius VI.

The carriage entered Avignon by the Porte d'Aix, traversed, without slackening speed, the whole length of the town with its narrow, crooked streets, built to escape both wind and sun, and drew up not fifty feet from the Porte d'Oulle, at the hotel du Palais-Égalité, which they were then beginning very quietly to call the hotel du Palais-Royal, the name it bore in former days, and still bears to-day.

These few insignificant words about the name of an inn before which the travelling-carriage we have in view had stopped, show plainly enough the state which France was in under that government of Thermidorian reaction known as the Directory. After the Revolutionary struggle which took place between the 14th of July, 1789, and the 9th Thermidor, 1794; after the events of the 5th and 6th of October, of June 21, August 10, September 2 and 3, May 21, Thermidor 29, and Prairial 1; after the executions of the king and his judges, the queen and her accusers, the

Girondins and the Cordeliers, the moderates and the Jacobins, France became conscious of the most horrible, most nauseous of all exhaustions, — the lassitude of blood! The country had therefore returned, if not to a need of monarchy, at least to the desire for a strong government, in which it could put some confidence, on which it could lean; a government which would act for it, and enable it to rest in peace and recover itself.

In place of this government, thus vaguely desired, the country obtained the feeble and irresolute Directory, composed at the present time of the voluptuous Barras, the intriguing Sieyès, the brave Moulins, the insignificant Roger Ducos, and the honest but rather too simple-minded Gohier. The result was a questionable dignity before the world at large, and a very doubtful tranquillity at home.

It is true that at the moment of which we write, our armies, so glorious during those epic campaigns of 1796–97, and lately thrown back for a time toward France by Scherer's incapacity at Verona and Cassano, and by the defeat and death of Joubert at Novi, were beginning to resume the offensive. Moreau had defeated Souwarov at Basignano; Brune had defeated the Duke of York and General Hermann at Bergen; Masséna had annihilated the Austro-Russians at Zurich; Korsakof had escaped with difficulty; and the Austrian Hotz, with three other generals, were killed and five made prisoners. Masséna saved France at Zurich, just as Villars, ninety years earlier, had saved it at Denain.

But the interior of the nation was not in so good a state, and the Directory was, it must be said, extremely embarrassed between the war in La Vendée and the guerrilla banditti of the South, to whom the inhabitants of Avignon, according to custom, were by no means averse.

The two travellers who got out of their carriage at the door of the Hôtel du Palais-Royal had, undoubtedly, some reason to fear the condition of mind in which the always excitable papal town might be; for just before they reached

Orgon, at a point where three roads met (one leading to Nîmes, the second to Carpentras, the third to Avignon), the postilion stopped his horses, and asked, turning round to them: —

“Will the citizens go by Avignon or Carpentras?”

“Which is the shortest way?” said the elder of the travellers in a harsh, imperative voice; although visibly the elder, he was not more than thirty years of age.

“Oh, the road through Avignon, citizen, by a good four miles.”

“Then go by Avignon,” was the answer.

And the carriage started again at a pace which showed that the *citizen* travellers, as the postilion called them, though the term *monsieur* was beginning to reappear in conversation, paid generous fees. The same desire for no delay was shown as they entered the hotel. It was again the elder of the two who spoke. He asked if they could dine at once; and the manner in which he asked seemed to show that his gastronomic demands would be few if the meal could be quickly served.

“Citizen,” replied the landlord, who had come to the door, napkin in hand, on hearing the wheels, “you shall be rapidly and comfortably served in your own room; but if you would allow me to advise —”

He hesitated.

“Oh, go on!” said the younger of the travellers, speaking for the first time.

“Well, it is that you should dine at the table d’hôte, as the gentleman who came in that carriage is now doing. The dinner is excellent and all served.” So saying, the landlord pointed to another travelling-carriage, very comfortably appointed, drawn by two horses, which stamped impatiently while the postilion was finding his patience in a bottle of Cahors wine under the window.

The first motion of those to whom the proposal was made was negative; but on second thoughts the elder of the two travellers, as if he had changed his mind, made an

interrogative sign to his companion, who answered it with a look which signified, "You know that I am at your orders."

"Very well, be it so," said the one who took the initiative; "we will dine at the table d'hôte." Then, turning to the postilion, who, hat in hand, was awaiting orders, he added, "Put the horses to in half an hour, not later."

The landlord pointed out the dining-room; and the travellers entered it, the elder of the two walking first, the other following him. Everybody knows the impression produced at a table d'hôte by new-comers. All eyes were turned upon them; the conversation, which seemed to be animated, stopped. The guests were made up of the frequenters of the hotel, the occupant of the carriage which was waiting in the courtyard, a wine-merchant from Bordeaux, staying in Avignon for reasons we shall presently relate, and a number of travellers going from Marseille to Lyon by the diligence.

The new arrivals bowed to the company with a slight inclination of the head, and sat down at the farther end of the table, separating themselves from the rest of the guests by three or four empty places. This seemingly aristocratic reserve increased the curiosity of which they were the object. Moreover, they gave the impression of unquestionable distinction, though their clothes were simple in the extreme. Both wore high-top boots and breeches, coats with long tails, overcoats, and broad-brimmed hats, which was the general dress of all young men of the period. But what distinguished them from the elegant young men in Paris, and even in the provinces, was their long, straight hair and the black stock buckled round their necks in the military fashion. A *muscadin*, — that was the name given to the dandies of the period, — a *muscadin* wore his hair like spaniels' ears, puffed beside his temples, the rest combed up and tied behind his head in a bag, and a huge cravat with long floating ends, in which his chin was buried. Some had reacted, if we may so call it, to powder.

As to the personality of the young men, they presented two diametrically opposite types. The elder of the two, he who had several times taken the initiative, and whose voice, even in its most familiar intonations, denoted the habit of command, was, as we have said, about thirty years of age, with black hair parted in the middle, and falling straight each side of his temples to his shoulders. He had the swarthy skin of a man who has travelled in southern climates; the lips were thin, the nose straight, the teeth white, and the eyes were the falcon eyes which Dante gives to Cæsar. His figure was short rather than tall, his hand delicate, his foot slender and elegant. He betrayed a certain awkwardness of manner which seemed to show that he was wearing for the moment a dress to which he was not accustomed; and when he spoke, his hearers, had they been beside the Loire instead of beside the Rhone, would have noticed in his pronounciation a marked Italian accent.

His companion seemed to be some three or four years younger. He was a handsome young man, with a rosy complexion, fair hair, light-blue eyes, a straight, firm nose, and a prominent but almost beardless chin. He was perhaps two inches taller than his companion; and though his figure was above the medium height, it was so admirably proportioned as a whole, so free in all its movements, that he was certain to be, if not extraordinarily strong, unusually agile and dexterous. Though dressed in the same manner as his companion, and apparently on a footing of equality, he showed a remarkable deference to the dark young man, which, as it could not result from age, was caused, no doubt, by some inferiority of position. For one thing, he called his companion Citizen, while the other called him Roland.

These remarks, which we make to initiate the reader into our tale, were probably not made to their full extent by the guests at the table d'hôte; for after giving a few moments' attention to the new guests, they turned their eyes away, and the conversation, interrupted for a moment, was

renewed. We must admit that it concerned a matter most interesting and important to travellers, — that of the stoppage of a diligence bearing a sum of sixty thousand francs belonging to the government. This affair had taken place the evening before on the road from Marseille to Avignon, between Lambesc and Pont-Royal.

At the first words that were said of the event the two young men listened attentively, with evident interest. The robbery had taken place on the road they had just taken, and the person who told of it was an actor in the scene, the wine-merchant from Bordeaux. Those who were the most curious to hear the particulars of the affair were the occupants of the diligence which had just come, and was soon to depart. The other guests, those who belonged to the locality, seemed sufficiently accustomed to such catastrophes to be able to give certain details themselves, instead of listening to them.

“So, citizen,” said a stout gentleman, against whom a tall woman, very thin and haggard, was leaning in terror, “you say that on the road by which we have just come this robbery took place?”

“Yes, citizen; between Lambesc and Pont-Royal. Did you notice a place where the road ascends between high banks? — a great many rocks are there.”

“Yes, yes, my dear,” said the wife, clinging to her husband’s arm, “I noticed them. I said, don’t you remember? ‘This is a bad place; I am glad we are here by day rather than by night.’”

“Oh, madame,” said a young man, who affected to slur his *r*’s after the fashion of the day, and who probably on ordinary occasions assumed to lead the conversation of the table d’hôte, “The Company of Jehu pay no attention to night or day.”

“What!” exclaimed the lady, still more alarmed, and turning to the wine-merchant. “Did this thing happen to you in broad daylight?”

“Yes, in broad daylight; at ten o’clock in the morning.”

"How many were there?" asked the stout gentleman.

"Four, citizen."

"Hidden beside the road?"

"No; they came on horseback, armed to the teeth and masked."

"That's their way," said the table d'hôte young man; "and they said, did n't they? 'Don't defend yourselves; no harm will happen to you. We only want the government money.'"

"Word for word, citizen."

"And then," continued this well-informed young man, "two got off their horses, flinging the bridles to their companions, and summoned the conductor to deliver up the money?"

"Citizen," said the wine-merchant, amazed, "you relate the thing as if you had seen it."

"Perhaps monsieur was there," said one of the travellers, half in jest and half in earnest.

"I don't know, citizen, whether in saying that you intend a rudeness," said the young man, carelessly; "but my political opinions are such that I do not regard your suspicion as an insult. If I had had the misfortune to be one of those attacked, or the honor to belong to those who made the attack, I should tell it as frankly in the one case as in the other. But yesterday, at ten o'clock, just as the diligence was stopped twelve miles from here, I was quietly breakfasting at this very table, and, by the bye, with the two gentlemen who do me the honor to sit beside me now."

"And pray," said the younger of the two travellers who had lately arrived, and who was called by his companion Roland, "how many men were you in the diligence?"

"Let me think; we were, — yes, that's it, — we were seven men and three women."

"Seven men, not including the conductor?" repeated Roland.

"Yes."

"And being seven men, you let four bandits rob the coach? I congratulate you, gentlemen."

"We knew with whom we had to deal," replied the wine-merchant; "and we took good care not to defend ourselves."

"With whom you had to deal!" exclaimed the young man. "Why, you had to deal, it seems to me, with thieves, with bandits."

"Not at all; they told us who they were."

"They told you that?"

"They said, 'Gentlemen, it is useless to defend yourselves. Ladies, do not be alarmed, we are not brigands; we belong to The Company of Jehu.'"

"Yes," said the table d'hôte young man; "they warned you that there might be no mistake. They always do that."

"Good heavens!" cried Roland; "who and what is this Jehu who has such polite companions? Is he their captain?"

"Monsieur," said a man, whose dress was somewhat that of a secularized priest, and who seemed to be not only an habitual guest at the table d'hôte, but also an initiate into the mysteries of the honorable company whose merits were then under discussion, "if you were better versed than you seem to be in Holy Scripture you would know that Jehu has been dead some twenty-six hundred years, and, consequently, that he cannot at the present time stop coaches on the highway."

"Monsieur l'abbé," replied Roland, who recognized an ecclesiastic, "as, in spite of the sharp tone in which you speak, I see you are a man of education, permit an ignoramus like myself to ask for a few details about this Jehu who has been dead for two thousand six hundred years, but who, nevertheless, is honored by a company which bears his name."

"Jehu," replied the churchman, in the same sour tone, "was a king of Israel, anointed by Elisha on condition that he would punish the crimes of the house of Ahab and of Jezebel and put to death the priests of Baal."

"Monsieur l'abbé," said the young man, laughing, "I thank you for the explanation. I don't doubt it is correct, and, above all, very learned; only, I must admit that it does not tell me much."

"How is that, citizen?" returned the abbé; "do you not see that Jehu is his Majesty King Louis XVIII., anointed on condition that he shall punish the crimes of the Revolution and put to death the priests of Baal, — in other words, all those who have taken any part whatsoever in the abominable state of things which for the last seven years has been called the Republic?"

"Yes, yes!" exclaimed the young man; "I see that. But among those whom The Company of Jehu are appointed to destroy do you reckon the brave soldiers who have driven back the enemies of France to the frontier, and the illustrious generals who have commanded the armies of Tyrol, of the Sambre-et-Meuse, and of Italy?"

"Undoubtedly, — they first of all, before all."

The eyes of the young man darted lightning; his nostrils dilated, his lips tightened. He rose from his chair; but his companion pulled him by the coat and made him sit down again, while with a single glance he silenced him.

Then the man who had shown this proof of his power spoke for the first time.

"Citizen," he said, addressing himself to the young man of the table d'hôte, "excuse two travellers who have just arrived from the ends of the earth, as we may call America and India. We have been away from France two years, and are totally ignorant of what is happening here, and very desirous to obtain information."

"Why, certainly," said the young man to whom these words were addressed; "that is only fair, citizen. Ask any question you please, and you shall be answered."

"Well, then," continued the dark young man with the eagle eye, the straight black hair, and the granite complexion, "now that I know who Jehu is and why his

Company was instituted, I would like to know what his companions do with the money they obtain."

"Oh, that's easily answered, citizen. You know there is much talk of the restoration of the Bourbon monarchy?"

"No, I did not know it," said the dark young man, in a tone which he vainly endeavored to render artless. "I have just arrived, as I told you, from the ends of the earth."

"What! you really did not know that? Six months hence it will be an accomplished fact."

"Really?"

"Yes. I have the honor to tell you so, citizen."

The two young travellers, whose appearance was military, exchanged a glance and a smile, though the younger of the two seemed chafing under the weight of his impatience.

Their informant continued, "Lyon is the headquarters of the conspiracy, — if, indeed, we can call conspiracy a plan which has been laid in open day; provisional government would be the better word."

"Well, then, citizen," said the dark young man, with a politeness that was not quite free from satire, "let us call it a provisional government."

"This provisional government has its staff and its armies —"

"Pooh! its staff, perhaps; but as to armies —"

"It has its armies, I repeat."

"Where are they?"

"One is organized in the mountains of Auvergne, under the orders of M. de Chardon; another in the Jura mountains, under the orders of M. Teyssonnet; and the third is acting, satisfactorily at the present time, in La Vendée, under d'Escarboville, Achille Leblond, and Georges Cadoudal."

"Really, citizen, you do me a great service in telling me this news. I thought the Bourbons were completely resigned to their exile; I supposed the police in a position to prevent royalist committees in the chief towns and ban-

dits on the highways. In short, I supposed La Vendée had been thoroughly pacificated by Hoche."

The young man to whom these remarks were addressed laughed heartily.

"Where do you come from?" he cried.

"I told you, citizen, from the ends of the earth."

"So I see." Then he added, "You must know that the Bourbons are not rich; the *émigrés*, whose property was confiscated and sold, are ruined. It is impossible to organize two armies and maintain a third without money. The royalist party were hampered. None but the Republic could pay its troops, and the quickest way was to take the Republic's money for that purpose."

"Ah! now I understand."

"That's fortunate."

"The Company of Jehu is an intermediary between the Republic and the Counter Revolution, — the tax-gatherers of the royalist generals; is that it?"

"Yes. It is not robbery; it is a military operation. Such attacks are feats of arms like any other."

"But," said the wine-merchant, timidly, "if The Company of Jehu only want the money of the government —"

"The money of the government and no other; there is no instance in which they have taken the money of a private person."

"No instance?"

"No instance."

"How does it happen, then, that yesterday they carried off, in addition to the government money, two hundred louis of mine?"

"My dear sir," replied the table d'hôte young man, "I have told you already that there is some mistake about that. As surely as my name is Alfred de Barjols, the money will be returned to you some day or other."

The wine-merchant heaved a sigh and shook his head, as if in spite of that assurance, he kept his doubts.

But at that moment, as though the promise made by the

young noble who had just revealed his station by giving his name had been agreed upon, a horse was suddenly pulled up before the house, steps were heard in the corridor, the door of the dining-room opened, and a masked man, armed to the teeth, appeared on the threshold.

"Gentlemen," he said, in the hush caused by his apparition, "is there a traveller among you named Jean Picot, who was yesterday in the diligence which was stopped between Lambesc and Pont-Royal?"

"Yes," said the wine-merchant, amazed.

"Are you he?" asked the masked man.

"Yes, I am."

"Was anything taken from you?"

"Yes; two hundred louis which I had given in charge of the conductor."

"And I may add," said the young noble, "that monsieur was in the act of speaking of his loss. He thought the money lost."

"Monsieur was mistaken," said the masked man. "We make war upon the government, and not on individuals; we are partisans, not robbers. Here are your two hundred louis, monsieur; and if anything of the kind happens again, claim your loss and give the name of Morgan."

So saying, the masked individual laid a bag of gold beside the wine-merchant, bowed courteously to the other guests, and went out, leaving some terrified and others bewildered by such daring.

II.

AN ITALIAN PROVERB.

Now, although the two sentiments which we have just indicated were the dominant ones among those present, they did not manifest themselves to an equal degree in all. Shades of both sentiments were graduated according to the age, the character, and, we may say, the social position of the individual. The wine-merchant, Jean Picot, the principal person concerned in the late event, recognizing at first sight, by the dress, weapons, and mask, one of the men who had stopped the coach, was for a moment stupefied; then, little by little, as he saw the purpose of the visit made to him by the mysterious bandit, he passed from stupefaction to joy, through all the phases that separate those two emotions. His bag of gold was beside him; but he seemed not to dare to touch it. Perhaps he feared that the instant he did so it would vanish like the gold of a dream which melts away during that period of progressive lucidity which comes between sleep and thorough waking.

The stout gentleman and his wife had shown, like the rest of their companions in the diligence, the most complete and undisguised terror. The husband was seated on the left of Jean Picot; and when the bandit approached the latter, he hastily, in the vain hope of maintaining a safe distance between himself and the Companion of Jehu, pushed back his chair against that of his wife, who, yielding to the pressure, endeavored to push back hers. But as the chair that came next was that of citizen Alfred de Barjols, who had no reason at all to fear the men he had lately praised, the chair of the stout gentleman's wife

encountered an obstacle in the immovability of that of the young noble; so — just as it happened at Marengo, eight or nine months later, when the general-in-chief thought it time to renew the offensive — the retrograde movement was arrested.

As for him (we are speaking now of citizen Alfred de Barjols), his attitude, also that of the abbé, who had given the Biblical explanation about Jehu, king of Israel, and his mission from Elisha, was that of a man who feels no fear, and even expects the event that happens, however unexpected that event may be. A smile was on his lips as he watched the masked man; and if the other guests had not been so preoccupied by their fears, they might have seen an almost imperceptible sign exchanged between the eyes of the bandit and the young noble, and instantly transmitted by the latter to the abbé.

The two travellers whom we ourselves introduced to the table d'hôte, and who, as we have said, sat apart at the end of the table, preserved the attitude natural to their respective characters. The younger had instinctively put his hand to his side as if to grasp an absent weapon, and had risen with a spring as if to rush at the throat of the masked man, which he would certainly have done had he been alone; but the elder, he who seemed to have not only the habit but the right to command the younger, pulled him as before by the coat, saying in an imperious, almost harsh tone: —

“Sit down, Roland.”

And the young man sat down.

But there was one among the guests who had remained, in appearance at least, impassable during the scene which had just taken place. He was a man thirty-three or thirty-four years of age, blond in hair, red of beard, calm and handsome in face, with large blue eyes, a fair skin, refined and intelligent lips, very tall, and speaking with a foreign accent which betrayed him to be a man born in an island the government of which was at that time making

bitter war against France. As far as could be judged from the few words he uttered, he spoke the French language, in spite of the accent we mention, with rare purity. At the first word he said, in which his English accent showed itself, the elder of the two travellers started. Turning to his companion, he seemed to ask with a glance how it was that an Englishman should be in France at a time when the war between the two nations would naturally keep the English out of France as it kept the French out of England. No doubt the explanation seemed impossible to Roland; for he shrugged his shoulders, and answered with his eyes, "It is quite as extraordinary to me as it is to you; but if you can't find the solution to the problem, mathematician that you are, don't ask me."

It was quite plain to both the young men that the fair man with the Anglo-Saxon accent was the traveller whose comfortable travelling-carriage was waiting with the horses harnessed in the courtyard, and that this traveller came from London, or, at any rate, from one of the counties of Great Britain. As to what he said, his words, as we have already stated, were rare, — so rare that in reality they were more exclamations than speech. But every now and then he asked some explanation on the state of France, and as he did so the Englishman openly took out a note-book and requested those about him — the wine-merchant, the abbé, the young noble — to repeat their words; which they each did with an amiability equal to the courteous tone of the request. In this way he had taken notes of all the most important, extraordinary, and picturesque features of the stoppage of the diligence, the state of La Vendée, and the nature of The Company of Jehu, thanking each informant by voice and gesture with the stiffness characteristic of our insular neighbors, returning his note-book, enriched each time by some new fact, to a side pocket in his overcoat.

Finally, like a spectator enjoying some startling scene, he gave a cry of satisfaction on seeing the masked man; he

listened with all his ears and gazed with all his eyes and never lost him from sight until the door closed behind him. Then, pulling his note-book from his pocket, —

“Oh, monsieur,” he said to his neighbor, who was no other than the abbé, “would you be so kind as to repeat to me, word for word, what was said by that gentleman who has just gone out?”

He began at once to write, and the abbé’s memory agreeing with his own, he had the satisfaction of transcribing in all its integrity the speech addressed by the Companion of Jehu to the citizen Jean Picot. Then, when that was written down, he exclaimed, with an accent which gave a singular stamp of originality to his words: —

“Ah! it is only in France that such things can happen; France is the most curious country in the world. I am delighted, gentlemen, to travel in France and know Frenchmen.”

The last sentence was said with such courtesy that nothing could be done after it had issued from that serious mouth but to thank the speaker, albeit he was a descendant of the conquerors at Crécy, Poitiers, and Agincourt. It was the younger of the two travellers who answered the Englishman’s politeness in words; and he did so with the careless and rather caustic manner which seemed habitual to him: —

“Upon my word, I’m exactly like you, my lord. I say ‘my lord,’ for I presume you are an Englishman.”

“Yes, monsieur,” replied the other; “I have that honor.”

“Well, as I was saying,” continued the young man, “I am, like you, delighted to travel in France and see what I am seeing. One must live under the government of citizens Gohier, Moulins, Roger Ducos, Sieyès, and Barras to see such foolery. I am willing to bet that fifty years hence, if some one relates that in a city of thirty thousand inhabitants, in broad day, a highway robber came, masked, armed to the teeth, and returned to an honest merchant two hun-

dred louis he had robbed him of the night before; and if he adds that this happened at a dinner-table where twenty or twenty-five persons were seated, and that this model bandit departed, and not one of those twenty or twenty-five persons took him by the throat, I am willing, I say, to bet that whoever has the audacity to tell the story will be branded as an infamous liar."

And the young man, throwing himself back in his chair, burst out laughing in a loud and aggressive manner.

"Monsieur," said the citizen Alfred de Barjols, "permit me to observe that that man you have just seen is not a highway robber."

"What is he then?"

"Probably he is a young man of as good a family as yours or mine."

"Count Horn, whom the regent ordered to be broken on the wheel in the place de Grève, was also a young man of good family, which is proved by all the nobles in Paris sending their carriages to his funeral.

"Count Horn, if I mistake not, murdered a Jew to rob him of a note of hand which he could not pay. No one will dare say that a Companion of Jehu has ever so much as hurt the hair of an infant."

"Well, be it so; let us admit that the Company was founded for philanthropic purposes, — to re-establish the balance of fortunes, redress the tricks of chance, reform the abuses of society. He may be a thief after the pattern of Karl Moor, but your friend Morgan — Was n't Morgan the name by which that worthy citizen called himself?"

"Yes," said the Englishman.

" — your friend Morgan is none the less a thief."

Citizen Alfred de Barjols turned very pale.

"The citizen Morgan is not my friend," said the young aristocrat; "but if he were, I should feel myself honored by his friendship."

"No doubt," replied Roland with a laugh. "As M. de

Voltaire says, 'The friendship of a great man is a blessing from the gods.'

"Roland, Roland!" said his companion in a low voice.

"Oh, general!" replied the other, letting the rank of his companion escape him, perhaps intentionally, "do let me, I implore you, continue a discussion which interests me immensely."

The elder man shrugged his shoulders.

"I desire, citizen," continued the young man, with strange persistence, "to gain information. It is two years since I left France, and during my absence such changes have taken place in manners and customs, clothes, tones, and accents, that perhaps the language has changed too. What do you call, in the language you are now speaking in France, stopping mail-coaches and taking the money they contain?"

"Monsieur," replied the young noble in the tone of a man who is determined to carry a discussion to its end. "I call that making war. Here is your companion, whom you have just called general; he will tell you, as a military man, that, apart from the pleasure of killing and being killed, the generals of all time have never done anything else than what the citizen Morgan is doing now."

"What!" cried the young man, his eyes darting fire, "do you dare compare —"

"Let that gentleman develop his theory, Roland," said the dark traveller, whose eyes, the reverse of those of his companion, which dilated as they flamed, were veiled by their long black lashes so as to conceal all that was passing in his mind.

"Ah!" said the young man, in his curt tone, "you see you are beginning to take an interest in the discussion yourself." Then, turning to the citizen de Barjols, whom he seemed to have selected for his antagonist, he added, "Go on, monsieur; the general permits it."

The young noble reddened as visibly as he had paled a moment earlier; then, with his teeth clenched, his elbow

on the table, his chin on his fist, as if to thrust himself as near as possible to his adversary, he said, with a Provençal accent, which grew more marked as he went on: —

“Since *the general permits*,” emphasizing the word “general,” “I shall have the honor to say to him, and therefore to you, citizen, that I think I have read in Plutarch that Alexander the Great when he started for India took with him only eighteen or twenty talents of gold, — something like one hundred or one hundred and twenty thousand francs. Now do you suppose that it was with such a sum as that that he fed his army, won the battle of Granicus, subdued Asia Minor, conquered Tyre, Syria, Egypt, built Alexandria, penetrated to Libya, had himself declared son of Jupiter by the oracle of Ammon, forced his way to Hyphases, and, when his soldiers refused to follow him farther, returned to Babylon, to surpass in luxury, debauchery, and self-indulgence the most luxurious, the most debauched, the most voluptuous of the kings of Asia? Did he get his money from Macedonia? Do you think that Philip, the most poverty-stricken king in that poor Greece, honored the checks that his son drew upon him? No; Alexander did as the citizen Morgan is doing, — only, instead of stopping coaches on the high road, he pillaged cities, held kings for ransom, raised supplies from the countries through which he passed. Let us turn to Hannibal. You know how he left Carthage, of course. He had n’t even the twenty talents in gold of his predecessor Alexander; and as he wanted money quite as badly, he took and sacked, in the midst of peace and in defiance of treaties, the town of Saguntum. After that he was rich and could open his campaign. This time I am not quoting Plutarch, but Cornelius Nepos. I will say nothing of his descent from the Pyrenees and his crossing of the Alps, nor of the three battles he won, seizing after each the treasure of the vanquished; but I come to the five or six years he spent in Campania. Do you believe that he and his army paid the Capuans for their subsistence, and that the bankers

of Carthage, with whom he had quarrelled, sent him the means of doing so? No; war fed war, — the Morgan system. Pass on to Cæsar. Ah, Cæsar! that's another thing. He started from Spain with some thirty million of debt, and returned with about the same; started again for Gaul, remained ten years with our ancestors, and during those ten years sent over one hundred millions to Rome; repassed the Alps, crossed the Rubicon, marched straight to the Capitol, forced the gates of the temple of Saturn, where the Treasury was, took all he wanted for his private needs (not for those of the Republic), three thousand pounds' weight of gold in ingots, and died, — he whom his creditors twenty years earlier would not allow to leave his little house in the Suburra street, — he died, leaving two or three thousand sesterces per head to the citizens, ten or twelve millions to Calpurnia, thirty or forty millions to Octavius, — still the Morgan system, except that Morgan, I am very sure, would die sooner than put into his own pocket any of the silver of the Gauls or the gold of the Capitol. Now, let us spring over eighteen centuries and come down to General Buonaparté — ”

And the young aristocrat, after the manner of those who were enemies to the conqueror of Italy, affected to dwell upon the *u*, which Bonaparte had dropped from his name, and on the *e* from which he had removed the accent.

This affectation seemed to irritate Roland, who made a movement as if to spring forward; but again his companion stopped him.

“Let be, let be, Roland,” he said; “I am sure that the citizen Barjols will not say that General Buonaparté, as he calls him, is a thief.”

“No, I shall not say it; but there is an Italian proverb which says it for me.”

“What is that?” asked the general, fixing his limpid, calm, clear eye on the speaker.

“I give it in all its simplicity, — ‘Francesi non sono tutti ladroni, ma buona parte;’ which means, ‘All Frenchmen are not thieves but — ’”

“‘A good part are’?” said Roland.

“Yes, ‘Buonaparté,’” replied Alfred de Barjols.

The insolent speech had scarcely left the lips of the young aristocrat before the plate with which Roland was playing flew from his hands and struck de Barjols full in the face. The women screamed; the men rose. Roland burst out laughing in the nervous manner that was habitual to him, and threw himself back in his chair. The young aristocrat was perfectly calm, though the blood was trickling from his eyebrow to his cheek.

At this instant the conductor of the diligence entered the room and said, in the usual formula:—

“Come, citizens, take your places.”

The travellers, anxious to get away from the scene of the quarrel, rushed to the door.

“Pardon me, monsieur,” said Alfred de Barjols to Roland; “you do not belong to the diligence, I hope?”

“No, monsieur; I came in a post-chaise. But don’t be uneasy; I shall not leave the inn.”

“Nor I,” said the Englishman. “Tell them to unharness the horses; I remain here.”

“I must go,” said the dark young man, whom Roland had called general, with a sigh. “You know, my dear friend, that I must go, that my presence is absolutely necessary over there. But I swear that nothing would induce me to leave you if I could possibly do otherwise.”

In saying these words, his voice betrayed an emotion which its usual hard and metallic quality seemed incapable of rendering. Roland, on the contrary, was gay and indifferent.

“Oh, no matter, general,” he said; “we were to part in any case at Lyon, as you have had the kindness to give me a month’s leave of absence to visit my family at Bourg. It is only a hundred and sixty miles or so less than we meant to be together. I’ll rejoin you in Paris. But you know that if at any moment you want a devoted arm and a heart that never sulks, you must send for me.”

“Make yourself easy about that, Roland,” said the general. Then looking attentively at the two adversaries, he added in a tone of indescribable tenderness, “Above all, Roland, don’t let yourself be killed; but also, if it is a possible thing, don’t kill your adversary. He strikes me as a gallant man. The day will come when I shall want such men on my side.”

“I’ll do my best, general, for your sake.”

At this moment the landlord appeared on the threshold of the door. “The carriage is ready,” he said.

The general took his hat and cane, which he had laid on a chair. Roland, on the contrary, followed him bare-headed, that it might be seen by all that he did not intend to accompany his friend. Alfred de Barjols, therefore, made no opposition to his leaving the room. Besides, it was quite evident that his antagonist was of those who make quarrels, not of those who avoid them.

The general got into the carriage, and as he sat down he said, “I cannot help it; my heart is heavy in leaving you thus, Roland, without a friend to serve as second.”

“Oh! don’t be uneasy about that, general; there is never any lack of seconds. There are, and always will be men who are curious to see how one man can kill another.”

“Till we meet again, then, Roland, — observe, I don’t say farewell; I say till we meet again.”

“Yes, my dear general,” replied Roland, in a voice that showed some feeling. “I understand you perfectly, and I thank you.”

“Promise to send me a letter the moment the affair is over. If you cannot write yourself, get some one to write for you.”

“Oh, don’t be alarmed, general; you shall have a letter from myself in less than four days,” answered Roland.

“Good! One word more; try to find out one thing.”

“What is that, general?”

“How it happens that while we are at war with England an Englishman stalks about France as freely and easily as if he were at home.”

“I will find it out.”

“How?”

“That I don't know; but if I promise you to find it out, I will find it out, if I have to ask him, himself.”

“Reckless fellow! don't get into another affair in that direction.”

“If I do, it won't be a duel. He's a national enemy; it will be a battle.”

“Well, once more, till I see you again. Kiss me.”

Roland flung himself with an impulse of gratitude upon the breast of the man who had given him this permission.

The general looked at him with profound affection.

“Au revoir,” he said; “have you any commissions for Paris?”

“Yes, three: my regards to Bourrienne, my respects to your brother Lucien, and my most tender homage to Madame Bonaparte.”

“I will attend to all.”

“Where shall I find you in Paris?”

“At my house in the rue de la Victoire; possibly —”

“Possibly?”

“Who knows? Possibly at the Luxembourg!” Then, flinging himself back in the carriage, as if he regretted having said as much even to the man he regarded as his best friend, he called to the postilion: —

“Road to Orange, and as fast as possible.”

The postilion, who was only waiting for the word, whipped his horses; the carriage started rapidly, rumbling like thunder, and disappeared through the Porte d'Oulle.

III.

THE ENGLISHMAN.

ROLAND remained motionless, not only as long as he could see the carriage, but long after it had disappeared. Then, shaking his head as if to get rid of the cloud that darkened his brow, he re-entered the inn and asked for a room.

"Show monsieur into number three," said the landlord to a chambermaid.

The woman took a key hanging from a large black wooden board, on which were ranged the numbers painted white in two lines, and signed to the young traveller to follow her.

"Have the goodness to send me up some paper and pens and ink," he said to the landlord; "and if M. de Barjols asks where I am, tell him the number of my room."

The landlord promised to obey these injunctions, and Roland followed the maid upstairs, whistling the Marseillaise. Five minutes later he was seated at a table with pens and paper before him, making ready to write. But just as he had written the first line some one rapped three times on the door.

"Come in," he said, twirling his chair round on one of its hind legs so as to face his visitor, whom he supposed to be either M. de Barjols or one of his friends.

The door opened, and the Englishman appeared.

"Ah!" cried Roland, enchanted at the visit, as he recalled the request the general had made of him; "is it you?"

"Yes," said the Englishman; "it is I."

"You are very welcome."

"Oh! if I am welcome then it is all right. I was not sure that I ought to come."

“Why not?”

“On account of Aboukir.”

Roland began to laugh.

“There were two battles of Aboukir,” he said, “one of which we lost, the other we gained.”

“I meant the one you lost.”

“Pooh!” said Roland, “we fight and kill and exterminate each other on the field of battle; but that need n’t prevent us from shaking hands on neutral ground. I repeat, therefore, you are very welcome, especially if you will kindly tell me why you have come.”

“Thank you; but, in the first place, read this.”

And the Englishman drew a paper from his pocket.

“What is this?” asked Roland.

“My credentials.”

“But what have I to do with your credentials?” asked Roland; “I am not a gendarme.”

“No; but as I have come here to offer you my services, perhaps you will not accept them unless you know who I am.”

“Your services, monsieur?”

“Yes; but read that first.”

Roland read:—

In the name of the French Republic:

The Executive Directory hereby orders that help and protection in case of need, and freedom to travel where he pleases, shall be given to Sir John Tanlay throughout the territory of the Republic.

(Signed)

FOUCHÉ.

And lower down:—

To whom it may concern:

I particularly recommend Sir John Tanlay as a philanthropist and a friend of liberty.

(Signed)

BARRAS.

“Have you read it?”

“Yes, I have read it; what else?”

"What else? My father did many services to M. Barras; that is why M. Barras lets me roam about France. And I am very well pleased to roam about France; it amuses me much."

"Yes, I remember, Sir John; you did us the honor to say that at table."

"I did say it; it is true. I also said that I am very fond of the French."

Roland bowed.

"Above all, General Bonaparte," continued Sir John.

"You like General Bonaparte very much?"

"I admire him; he is a great, a very great man."

"By heavens! Sir John, I am sorry he is n't here to hear an Englishman say that."

"Oh, if he were here I should not say it."

"Why not?"

"I should not wish him to think I said such things to give him pleasure. I say so because that is my opinion."

"I don't doubt it," said Roland, who could not make out what the Englishman was aiming at, and who, having learned from the passport all that the general wanted to know, was now holding back on his guard.

"And when I heard you," continued the Englishman, with the same phlegm, "taking the side of General Bonaparte, I was pleased."

"Really?"

"Much pleased," said the Englishman, nodding his head affirmatively.

"So much the better."

"But when I saw you throw a plate at M. Alfred de Barjols' head I was grieved."

"Grieved? And why?"

"Because in England a gentleman never throws a plate at the head of another gentleman."

"Monsieur," said Roland, rising and frowning, "have you come here to read me a lesson?"

"Oh, no; I came to say that perhaps you are embarrassed about finding a second."

"Faith! Sir John, I am willing to admit that just as you knocked at the door I was wondering whom I could ask to do me that service."

"I will, if you like," said the Englishman. "I will be your second."

"I accept," cried Roland, "with all my heart."

"That is the service I came to offer."

Roland held out his hand. "Thank you," he said.

The Englishman bowed.

"Now," said Roland, "as you have had the good taste, Sir John, to tell me who you are before offering me your services, it is only right that in accepting them I should tell you who I am."

"As you please."

"My name is Louis de Montrevel; I am aide-de-camp to General Bonaparte."

"Aide-de-camp to General Bonaparte! I am very glad of that."

"That explains to you why I took up, perhaps a little too warmly, the defence of my general."

"No, not too warmly; only, — the plate, you know."

"Oh! I know I might have done it without the plate; but I couldn't help it. I had my hand on the plate, and I flung it at M. de Barjols; it went off of itself without any will of mine."

"You will not tell him that, will you?"

"Certainly not. I only tell it to you to set your mind at rest."

"Very good; then you will fight him?"

"I have stayed here for that, at any rate."

"What weapon?"

"That is not our affair, Sir John."

"How do you mean; not our affair?"

"No; M. de Barjols is the one insulted. He has the choice of weapons."

"Then shall you accept the one he proposes?"

"I shall not, Sir John; but you will, in my name. I

don't know if that is how you do in England, but in France the principals take no part in the matter. The seconds manage everything. What they do is always considered right."

"Then whatever I do will satisfy you?"

"Perfectly."

The Englishman bowed.

"What day and what hour?" he asked.

"Oh, as soon as possible. It is two years since I have seen my family, and I own to you I'm in a hurry to get to them."

The Englishman looked at Roland with a sort of astonishment; he spoke with such assurance, as if he were certain of not being killed. At that instant a rap was made on the door, and the voice of the innkeeper was heard asking, "Can I come in?"

Roland answered affirmatively. The door opened, and the landlord entered, holding in his hand a card, which he gave to his guest. The young man took the card and read, "Charles de Valensolle."

"From M. de Barjols," said the landlord.

"Very good," replied Roland. Then, passing the card to the Englishman, he said, "That concerns you; it is unnecessary that I should see the gentleman. M. de Valensolle is M. de Barjols' second; you are mine. Arrange the affair between you. Only," added the young man, pressing the Englishman's hand and looking at him fixedly, "let it all be done seriously. I shall object to what you do if there is no chance of death on either side."

"Don't be anxious," said the Englishman. "I will act for you as for myself."

"That is all right. Go now, and when you have settled everything, come back. I shall not stir from this room."

Sir John followed the innkeeper. Roland sat down again, twirled his chair back to the table, took up his pen, and began to write.

When Sir John returned Roland had written and sealed

two letters and was writing the address on a third. He signed to the Englishman to wait until he had finished, that he might give him his full attention. Then he concluded the address, sealed the letter, and turned round.

"Well," he said, "is it all arranged?"

"Yes," said the Englishman; "it was an easy matter. You have to do with a true gentleman."

"So much the better," remarked Roland, waiting.

"You will fight two hours hence by the fountain of Vaucluse, — an excellent place, — with pistols, advancing to each other, each firing as he pleases and continuing to advance after the fire of his adversary."

"Faith, you're right, Sir John; that's well managed. Did you arrange it?"

"I and M. de Barjols' second. Your adversary has renounced his rights as the insulted party."

"Are the weapons chosen?"

"I offered my pistols. They were accepted on my word of honor that neither you nor M. de Barjols had ever seen them. They are excellent weapons; I can cut a bullet on a knife-blade with them at twenty paces."

"Heavens! you are a practised hand, then, Sir John?"

"Yes; they say I am the best shot in England."

"I am glad to know it. When I want to be killed I'll quarrel with you."

"No, don't do that," said the Englishman; "it would pain me very much to have to fight you."

"I'll try to spare you that grief. So, then, at two o'clock, you say?"

"Yes; you said you were in a hurry."

"Precisely; how far is it to the place?"

"From here to Vaucluse?"

"Yes."

"About twelve miles."

"It will take an hour and a half to get there; we have no time to lose. Now let us get rid of all the troublesome matters, and have nothing before us but the pleasure."

The Englishman looked at the young man in astonishment. Roland seemed to pay no attention to the look.

"Here are three letters," he said, — "one for Madame de Montrevel, my mother; another for Mademoiselle de Montrevel, my sister; the third for citizen Bonaparte, my general. If I am killed you will simply put them into the post. Is that too much trouble?"

"If such a misfortune should happen, I shall take the letters myself," said the Englishman. "Where do Madame de Montrevel and your sister live?"

"At Bourg, the capital of the department of the Ain."

"That is very near here," said the Englishman. "As for General Bonaparte, I'll follow him, if necessary, to Egypt. I should much like to see General Bonaparte."

"If you will, as you say, Sir John, take the trouble to carry the letter yourself, you will not have such a distance to go. Within three days General Bonaparte will be in Paris."

"Oh!" exclaimed the Englishman, but without showing the least surprise; "you think so?"

"I am sure of it," replied Roland.

"He is certainly a very extraordinary man, your General Bonaparte. Now, have you any other request to make of me, Monsieur de Montrevel?"

"Only one, Sir John."

"Oh, as many as you like!"

"Thank you, no; only one. If I am killed," continued Roland, "for, after all, one ought to prepare for everything, you will send my body to my mother, — unless, indeed, you prefer to throw it into the Rhone, which I leave to your discretion —"

"It will be no more trouble," interrupted the Englishman, "to take your coffin than your letter."

"Ah, Sir John, you're a capital fellow!" cried Roland, laughing loudly. "It was Providence in person who brought us together. Come, let us start!"

They left the room which Roland occupied; that of Sir

John was on the same floor. Roland waited till the Englishman went in and fetched his pistols. He came out presently with the box in his hand.

"Now," said Roland, "how shall we go to Vacluse, — on horseback or in a carriage?"

"In a carriage, if you are willing; it is more convenient in case of being wounded. Mine is in waiting now."

"I thought you told them to unharness."

"I gave the order; but I afterward sent for the postilion and countermanded it."

They went downstairs.

"Tom!" called Sir John, as they reached the door, where a servant in the stiff livery of an English groom was waiting, "take charge of that box."

"Am I to go with you, Sir John?" asked the man.

"Yes," replied Sir John.

Then, showing Roland the steps of the carriage, which the servant let down, he said:—

"Come, Monsieur de Montrevel."

Roland got into the carriage and stretched himself out luxuriously.

"Upon my word," he said, "it takes an Englishman to understand what the comfort of travelling-carriages ought to be; this is like being in one's bed. I will bet you pad your coffins before getting into them."

"Yes, that is true," answered Sir John; "the English understand comfort; but the French are a much more curious people — and more amusing. Postilion, to Vacluse."

IV.

THE DUEL.

THE road was passable only from Avignon to l'Isle. They did the nine miles between the two places in an hour. At the village of l'Isle they were obliged to leave the carriage. On making inquiries they found they were the first to arrive; and they immediately took the path which led to the fountain of Vaucluse.

"Oh! oh!" cried Roland; "there ought to be a good echo here;" and he gave two or three cries, to which the echo replied with much amiability.

"Upon my word," said the young man, "that is a wonderful echo! There is none that I know of except that of the Seinonnetta at Milan, to compare with it. Listen, Sir John."

And he began, with modulations which showed an admirable voice and an excellent method, to sing a Tyrolese air, which seemed a defiance of rebellious music to the human throat. Sir John looked at the young man and listened with an astonishment he did not give himself the trouble to conceal. When the last note had died away among the cavities of the mountain, he cried out, "God damn me! I do believe your liver is out of order."

Roland looked at him; but seeing that Sir John intended to say no more, he asked:—

"What makes you think that?"

"You are too noisily gay not to be deeply melancholy."

"And that anomaly surprises you?"

"No, nothing surprises me. But hush! here come the others."

As Sir John spoke, the forms of three persons were seen, coming along the same rough and rocky path they themselves had just taken. Roland counted them. "Three!" he said; "why three, when we are but two?"

"Oh, I forgot to tell you," replied Sir John, "that M. de Barjols, as much in your interest as for his own, asked permission to bring a surgeon, — one of his friends."

"What for?" asked Roland, frowning.

"Why, in case either of you are wounded; it often saves a man's life to bleed him immediately."

"Sir John," said Roland, "I don't understand such delicacies in the matter of a duel. If men fight they fight to kill. They can be as polite as they please beforehand, as your ancestors and mine were at Fontenoy, — that's all very well; but when swords are once unsheathed or pistols loaded, the life of one or the other of them ought to pay for the trouble they have taken and the heart-beats they have lost."

The Englishman again looked curiously at the young man. Meantime, the three new-comers had approached within speaking distance. They bowed to the two gentlemen. Roland, with a smile on his lips which just disclosed his beautiful white teeth, returned their bow. Sir John came near enough to say in his ear: —

"You are not needed; go up that path toward the fountain. I will call you when we are ready."

"Ah, that's a good idea!" said Roland. "I have always wanted to see that famous fountain of Vacluse, the Hippocrene of Plutarch. You know the sonnet? —

' Chiari, fresche e dolci acque
Ove le belle membra
Pose colei, che sola a me perdona.'

"If I lose this occasion, I may never have another. Which way is it?"

"Not a hundred feet off. Take that path; you'll find it at the turn, at the foot of that immense rock you see here."

“Sir John, you are a capital guide; thank you.”

And, with a friendly wave of the hand, he went off in the direction of the fountain, singing under his breath the pretty pastoral of Desportes:—

“Rosette, a little absence
Has turned thine heart from me;
I, knowing that inconstance,
Have turned my heart from thee.
No wayward beauty o'er me
Such power shall obtain;
We'll see, my fickle lassie,
Who first will turn again.”

Sir John turned away as he heard the modulations of that voice, so fresh and tender, which in its higher notes had something of a feminine quality. His cold, methodical mind could understand nothing of this nervous fitful nature, except that he had there, under his eyes, one of the most amazing organizations he had ever met with.

The other young men awaited him; the surgeon stood a little apart. Sir John carried the box of pistols in his hand. He laid it on a rock with a flat top, drew from his pocket a key which seemed made by a jeweller rather than a locksmith, and opened the box. The weapons were magnificent, though of great simplicity. They came from the manufactory of Manton, the grandfather of the man who is still the best gunsmith in London. Sir John Tanlay gave them to M. de Barjols' second for examination. M. de Valensolle tried the triggers, pushed the locks forward and back, and looked to see if the weapons were double-barrelled. They were single-barrelled. M. de Barjols cast his eye upon them, but did not touch them.

“Our opponent does not know these weapons?” asked M. de Valensolle.

“He has not even seen them,” replied Sir John. “I give you my word of honor.”

“Oh!” said M. de Valensolle, “a simple denial was enough.”

The terms of the duel were gone over a second time, that there might be no misunderstanding. Then, all conditions being agreed to, the pistols were loaded, so as not to lose time in useless preparations. They were then replaced in the box, the box given to the surgeon, and Sir John, with the key in his pocket, went to call Roland.

He found him talking to a little shepherd-boy who was watching three goats on the steep, rocky slope of the mountain, and throwing stones into the fountain. Sir John opened his lips to tell Roland that all was ready, but the latter, without giving him time to speak, exclaimed:—

“You have no idea what this child has been telling me. A perfect Rhine legend! He says that this pool, the depth of which is not known, extends some six or eight miles under the mountain; and a fairy lives in it, half woman, half snake, who glides upon the surface of the water in the calm summer nights, calling to the shepherds on the mountain, letting them see nothing more than her long hair and naked shoulders and her beautiful arms. The stupid hinds are caught by the semblance of a woman; they draw near. They make her a sign to come to them; but she, on the contrary, signs to them to go to her. The fools advance, taking no heed to their steps. Suddenly the earth falls away from their feet, the fairy opens her arms, clasps them, plunges below into her dripping palaces, and returns the next day to the surface alone. How the devil can these idiots of shepherd-boys know the tale that Virgil related in his noble verse to Augustus and Mæcenas?”

He remained pensive a moment, with his eyes fixed on the azure depths; then turning to Sir John, he took him, all amazed at such mobility of mind, by the arm, and led him to where the others were awaiting them. They, during this time, had found a suitable piece of ground, — a little plateau hanging, as it were, from the side of the mountain, exposed to the western sun, on which was a ruined castle, now used by the shepherds as a refuge when

the mistral overtook them. A flat space about a hundred and fifty feet long and sixty wide, which might once have been the platform of the castle battery, was now to be the closing scene of this part of our drama.

"We are here, gentlemen," said Sir John.

"We are ready, gentlemen," replied M. de Valensolle.

"The principals will have the goodness to listen to the conditions," said Sir John. Then, addressing M. de Valensolle, he added, "Read them, monsieur. You are French, and I am a foreigner; you will explain them more clearly than I can."

"You are of those foreigners, monsieur, who teach the purity of our language to us poor dwellers in Provence; but since you so courteously invite me to speak, I obey you. Gentlemen," he continued, "it is agreed that you shall stand at forty paces; that you advance each toward the other; that each shall fire when he pleases; and, wounded, or not, shall have the right to advance after receiving his adversary's fire."

The two combatants bowed in sign of assent; and then, at the same moment, almost with one voice they said:—

"The pistols!"

Sir John pulled the little key from his pocket and opened the box. Then he approached M. de Barjols and offered it to him open. The latter wished to yield the choice of weapons to his adversary; but, with a wave of his hand, Roland refused, saying in a voice, the sweetness of which was almost feminine:—

"After you, M. de Barjols. I am told that although you are the insulted party, you have renounced all your advantages; the least I can do is to yield this one to you, — if, indeed, it is an advantage."

M. de Barjols insisted no longer, and took a pistol at random. Sir John offered the other to Roland, who took it, and without even looking at its mechanism, let the hand that held it hang at his side. During this time M. de Valensolle had measured forty paces. A cane was stuck in the ground as a point of departure.

"Will you measure after me?" he asked of Sir John.

"Needless, monsieur," replied the latter. "Monsieur de Montrevel and I rely entirely upon you."

M. de Valensolle planted another cane at the fortieth pace.

"Gentlemen," he said, "whenever you please."

Roland's antagonist was already at his post, hat and coat off. The surgeon and the seconds stood aside. Roland tossed off his hat and coat and placed himself forty paces from M. de Barjols, facing him. Both, one to right and one to left, cast a glance at the same horizon. Nothing was visible to Roland's right and to M. de Barjols' left except the rise of the overhanging mountain; but on the opposite side, that is to say, to the right of M. de Barjols and on Roland's left, the sight was very different.

The horizon was illimitable. In the foreground lay the plain with its ruddy soil pierced on all sides by rocks, like a Titan graveyard where the bones were pushing through the earth. In the middle distance was Avignon, with its girdle of walls and its vast palace, like a crouching lion, seeming to hold the panting city in its claws. Beyond Avignon, a luminous line, like a river of molten gold, defined the Rhone. On the other side of the Rhone rose, in a dark-blue vista, the chain of hills which separate Avignon from Nîmes and d'Uzès. Far, far in the distance, the sun, at which one of these two men was probably looking for the last time, sank slowly and majestically in an ocean of gold and purple.

The men themselves presented a singular contrast. One, with his black hair, his olive skin, his slender limbs, his sombre eye, was the type of that Southern race which counts among its ancestors Greeks, Romans, Arabs, and Spaniards. The other, with his rosy complexion, fair hair, blue eyes, and soft hands dimpled like a woman's, was the type of that race of the temperate regions which reckons Gauls, Germans, and Normans among its forbears. If any one desired to magnify the interest of the situation

it would be easy to believe that it concerned something more than a combat between two men. It might be thought a duel of a people against a people, a race against a race, the South against the North.

Were these the thoughts that filled the mind of Roland and plunged him into a gloomy revery? Probably not. The fact is that at the moment when he seemed to have forgotten seconds, antagonist, and duel he was lost in contemplation of the splendid scene before him. M. de Barjols' voice aroused him from this poetic stupor.

"When you are ready, monsieur," he said, "I am."

Roland started.

"Pardon me, monsieur," he said, "for having kept you waiting; I am very absent-minded. I am ready now."

Then, with a smile on his lips and his hair just lifted by the breeze, taking no more precautions than he would for an ordinary walk, while his opponent took all that were usual in such a case, Roland advanced toward M. de Barjols.

Sir John's face, in spite of its ordinary impassibility, betrayed a deep anxiety. The distance between the adversaries lessened rapidly. M. de Barjols stopped first, took aim and fired when Roland was at ten paces from him. The ball lifted a curl of Roland's hair but did not touch him. He turned toward his second.

"Fire, fire, monsieur!" said both seconds together.

Monsieur de Barjols stood silent and motionless on the spot where he had fired.

"Pardon me, gentlemen," replied Roland, "but you will, I trust, permit me to be the judge of the time and manner of returning fire. After receiving M. de Barjols' shot I have a few words to say to him which I could not say earlier." Then bowing to the young aristocrat, who was pale and calm, he said, "Monsieur, perhaps I was too hasty in our discussion this morning —"

He waited.

"It is for you to fire, monsieur," replied M. de Barjols.

"But," continued Roland, as if he had not heard him, "you will understand the reason of my excitement and perhaps excuse it when I say that I am a soldier, and aide-de-camp to General Bonaparte."

"Fire, monsieur!" repeated the young noble.

"Say a single retracting word, monsieur," persisted Roland; "say that General Bonaparte's reputation for honor and delicacy is such that a miserable Italian proverb cannot hurt him. Say that, and I throw this pistol away to clasp your hand; for I see, monsieur, that you are a brave man."

"I shall not admit the honor and delicacy of which you speak, monsieur, until General Bonaparte uses the influence his genius gives him over France as Monk used his, — to reinstate his legitimate sovereign upon the throne."

"Ah!" cried Roland, with a smile; "that is asking too much of a Republican general."

"Then I maintain what I said," replied the young noble. "Fire, monsieur, fire!" Then, as Roland made no haste to obey him, "Heavens and earth!" he cried; "why don't you fire?"

At these words Roland made a movement as if to fire in the air.

"Ah!" cried M. de Barjols, "don't do that, I entreat you, or I shall insist that you begin again, and that you fire first."

"Upon my honor!" cried Roland, becoming as pale as if the blood had left his body, "this is the first time that I have done as much as this for any man. Go to the devil! and if you don't want to live, then die!"

So saying, he lowered his weapon and fired, without troubling himself to aim.

Alfred de Barjols put his hand to his breast, swayed forward and backward, turned half round, and fell with his face to the ground. Roland's ball had gone through his heart.

Sir John, as soon as M. de Barjols fell, went straight to

Roland and drew him to the spot where he had thrown his hat and coat.

"That is the third," muttered Roland, with a sigh; "but you are my witness that this one would have it."

Then, giving his smoking pistol to Sir John, he put on his hat and coat.

During this time M. de Valensolle picked up the other pistol which had fallen from his friend's hand; and he now brought it with the box to Sir John.

"Well?" said the Englishman, with a motion of his eyes toward Alfred de Barjols.

"He is dead," replied the second.

"Did I act as a man of honor, monsieur?" asked Roland, wiping from his face the sweat, which suddenly inundated it as he heard of his opponent's death.

"Yes, monsieur," replied M. de Valensolle; "only, allow me to say this: You have the fatal hand."

Bowing to Roland and his friend with perfect politeness, he returned to the body of his friend.

"And you, Sir John, what do you say?" asked Roland.

"I say," said Sir John, with a sort of forced admiration, "that you are one of those men who are made by the divine Shakspeare to say: —

'Danger and I, —
We were two lions littered in one day,
But I the elder.'

V.

ROLAND.

WHEN Roland and Sir John Tanlay returned to the hôtel du Palais-Royal, the latter went up to his room to put away his pistols, the sight of which might, he thought, excite something like remorse in Roland's breast. Then he rejoined the young officer and returned the three letters with which Roland had intrusted him. He found him sitting pensively, with his elbows on the table. Without saying a word, the Englishman laid the letters before him.

The young man cast his eyes on their addresses, took the one for his mother, unsealed it, and read it over. As he read, big tears rolled down his cheeks. Sir John gazed with fresh astonishment at this new aspect under which Roland now appeared to him. He could have thought all things possible to this many-sided nature except the shedding of tears, which were now flowing silently from the young man's eyes.

Shaking his head and paying not the slightest attention to Sir John's presence, Roland murmured: —

“Poor mother! poor mother! She would have wept for me. It is well it is as it is; mothers were not made to weep for their children.”

He tore up the letters mechanically, and burned the fragments with extreme care. Then ringing for the chambermaid, he asked her, “At what hour must the letters be in the post?”

“By half-past six,” she answered; “you have only a few minutes.”

"Wait, then," he said.

Taking a pen he wrote, —

MY DEAR GENERAL, — It is as I told you; I am living and he is dead. You must admit it has the appearance of winning a wager. Devotion to death.

Your paladin,

ROLAND.

Then he sealed the letter, wrote the address, "General Bonaparte, rue de la Victoire, Paris," and gave it to the chambermaid, telling her not to lose a moment in putting it into the post. It was then that he seemed first to notice Sir John, and he held out his hand to him.

"You have just done me a great service," he said, — "one of those services which bind two men to each other for eternity. I am your friend; will you do me the honor of being mine?"

Sir John pressed the hand that Roland held out to him.

"Oh!" he said; "I thank you very much. I should never have asked that honor; but you offer it, and I accept."

Even the impassible Englishman felt his heart soften and a tear trembled lightly on his lashes. Then looking at Roland, he said: —

"It is unfortunate that you are in such a hurry to reach home. It would have given me much pleasure and satisfaction to spend a day or two with you."

"Where were you going, Sir John, when we met?"

"I? — oh, nowhere. I am only travelling to escape being bored; unfortunately, I am often bored."

"Then you were going nowhere?"

"I was going everywhere."

"That's exactly the same thing," said the young officer, laughing. "Well, then, will you do something?"

"Oh, very willingly, if it is possible."

"Perfectly possible; it only depends on you."

"What is it?"

"You agreed, if I were killed, to take me to my mother, or throw me into the Rhone."

"I should have taken you to your mother and not thrown you into the Rhone."

"Well, instead of taking me dead take me to her living; you will be even better received."

"Oh!"

"Yes; we will stay two weeks at Bourg. That is my native town, and one of the dullest in France; but as your compatriots are pre-eminent for originality perhaps you will amuse yourself where others would be bored. Do you agree?"

"I should like nothing better," said the Englishman; "but it seems to me scarcely proper on my part —"

"Oh! we are not in England, Sir John, where etiquette rules everything. We have neither king nor court; we did n't cut off the head of that poor creature they called Marie-Antoinette to put her Majesty Etiquette in her place."

"I should like to go," said Sir John.

"My mother is an excellent woman, and very distinguished. My sister was sixteen when I left home; she must now be eighteen. She was quite pretty, and may be beautiful by this time. Then there's my brother Édouard, a young scamp of twelve, who will let off fire-crackers between your legs, and talk a gibberish of English to you. At the end of the two weeks we will go to Paris together."

"I have just come from Paris," said the Englishman.

"You said you would go to Egypt to see General Bonaparte. It is not so far to Paris as it is to Cairo. Come there with me; I'll present you to him, and I'll warrant that if presented by me you shall be well received. You spoke of Shakspeare just now —"

"Oh, yes; I am always quoting him."

"That proves that you like comedies, dramas."

"Indeed I do; that's true enough."

"Well, General Bonaparte is on the point of producing

one in his own style which will not be wanting in interest, I'll answer for it."

"Then," said Sir John, still hesitating, "if I may, without seeming intrusive, accept your offer —"

"I should hope so. You will give pleasure to everybody, — to me, especially."

"Then I accept."

"Bravo! Now, let's see; when can you start?"

"This instant. I will tell the postilion to send for other horses; and as soon as they come we will go."

Roland made a sign of agreement. Sir John left the room to give his orders, and presently returned, saying that a couple of cutlets and some cold chicken were ready for them below. Roland took his valise and went down. The Englishman replaced his pistols in his carriage box. Both ate enough to enable them to travel all night, and as nine o'clock was striking from the Franciscan church, they settled themselves in the carriage and left Avignon (where their passage left another trail of blood), Roland with the careless indifference of his nature, Sir John Tanlay with the absolute impassibility of his nation. A quarter of an hour later both were asleep; or, at any rate, the silence that each maintained might make others think they had gone to sleep.

We shall profit by these moments of repose to give our readers some indispensable information as to Roland and his family.

Roland was born July 1, 1773, four years and a few days later than Bonaparte, with whom, or rather following whom, he first appeared in this book. He was the son of M. Charles de Montrevel, colonel of a regiment long in garrison at Martinique, where he had married a creole named Clotilde de la Clémencière. Three children were born of the marriage, two sons and a daughter, — Louis, whose acquaintance we have made under the name of Roland; Amélie, whose beauty her brother had praised to Sir John, and Édouard.

M. de Montrevel was recalled to France in 1782, and he then obtained admission for his elder son Louis (we shall see later how the name was changed to Roland) to the *École Militaire* in Paris. It was there that Bonaparte first knew the boy, just as he himself, on the report of M. de Keralio, was judged worthy of promotion from the *École de Brienne* to the *École Militaire*. Louis was the youngest pupil. Though he was only thirteen, he had made himself already remarkable for the ungovernable and quarrelsome character, of which, thirteen years later, he gave so marked an example at the table d'hôte at Avignon.

Bonaparte himself, who was a child in his way at this period of his life, had the good side of the same character; that is to say, without being quarrelsome, he was firm, obstinate, unconquerable. He recognized in the boy several of his own qualities, and this likeness in their natures made him forget the child's defects and attached him to him. The boy, on his side, conscious of a supporter in the young Corsican, leaned upon him.

One day he went to find his great friend, as he called Napoleon, just as the latter was deeply engaged in the solution of a mathematical problem. The boy knew the importance the future officer of artillery attached to that science, which so far had won him his greatest, or rather his only successes. He therefore stood beside him without speaking or moving.

The young mathematician felt the presence of the child as he plunged deeper and deeper into the intricacies of his calculation, until at the end of ten minutes he came out of them victorious. Then he turned to his young comrade with the inward satisfaction of a man who issues conqueror from any struggle, be it with science or material things. The boy stood erect beside him, pale, his teeth clenched, his arms rigid, his fists closed.

"Oh! ho!" said young Bonaparte; "what now?"

"Valence, the governor's nephew, struck me."

"Well!" said Bonaparte, laughing; "and you want me to strike him back for you?"

The boy shook his head.

"No," he said; "I came to you because I want to fight him."

"Fight Valence?"

"Yes."

"But Valence will get the better of you, child; he is four times as strong as you."

"Yes; and therefore I don't want to fight him as boys fight. I want to fight him as men fight."

"Pooh!"

"Does that surprise you?" asked the boy.

"Oh, no," said Bonaparte; "what weapon do you want to fight with?"

"Swords."

"None but the sergeants have swords, and they won't lend them to you."

"Then we can do without them."

"In that case what will you fight with?"

The boy pointed to the compasses with which the mathematician had just made his equations.

"Oh, my child!" cried Bonaparte; "compasses make dreadful wounds."

"So much the better," said Louis. "I can kill him."

"Suppose he kills you?"

"I'd rather he did than bear his blow."

Bonaparte made no further objection. He liked courage by instinct, and that of his young comrade pleased him.

"Well, so be it!" he said. "I will go and see Valence, and tell him you wish to fight him, — but not till to-morrow."

"Why to-morrow?"

"You will have the night to reflect."

"And between now and to-morrow," said the child, "Valence will be thinking me a coward." Then shaking his head, "It is too long between now and to-morrow." And he walked away.

"Where are you going?" asked Bonaparte.

“To ask some one else if he will be my friend.”

“Am not I your friend?”

“Not now, for you think me a coward.”

“Enough!” said the young man, rising.

“Are you going?”

“I am going.”

“At once?”

“At once.”

“Ah!” cried the boy. “I beg your pardon; you are indeed my friend.” And he sprang upon his neck weeping. They were the first tears he had shed since he received the blow.

Bonaparte went to find Valence, and gravely explained to him the object of his mission. Valence was a tall lad of seventeen, already possessing, like certain precocious natures, a beard and moustache; he seemed at least twenty. He was, moreover, a head taller than the boy he had insulted. To Bonaparte's remarks Valence replied that Louis had pulled his queue as if it were a bell-cord (they wore queues at that time); that he was twice warned to desist, but returned and did it a third time, on which, considering him a mischievous boy, he, Valence, had treated him as one.

This reply was carried to Louis, who retorted that to pull a comrade's queue was only teasing him; whereas a blow was an insult. The child's obstinacy gave him the logic of a man of thirty. The modern Popilius was forced to go back and declare war against Valence, who was placed in a most embarrassing situation. He could not fight a child without making himself ridiculous. If he fought and wounded him, the affair would be horrible; if he was wounded himself, he should never get over it as long as he lived. And yet Louis' obstinacy, which refused to yield, made the matter a serious one. A council of the “Grands” was called, as was usually done in cases of difficulty. The Grands decided that one of their number could not fight a child, but that as the child persisted

in considering himself a young man, Valence must say to him before their schoolmates that he was sorry for having treated him as a child and would in future regard him as a young man.

Louis was sent for. He was awaiting the decision in his friend's room, and was presently introduced to the conclave assembled in the playground of the younger scholars. There Valence, to whom his comrades had dictated a speech (hotly debated among themselves to save the honor of the Grands toward the Petits), declared to Louis that he regretted what had happened, that he had treated him according to his age, and not according to his intelligence and his courage, and that he now begged him to excuse his impatience and to shake hands with him in sign that all was forgotten.

But Louis shook his head.

"I have heard my father, who is a colonel, say," he replied, "that whoever receives a blow and does not fight is a coward. The first time I see my father I shall ask him whether he who gives a blow and makes excuses to escape fighting is not more of a coward than he who received it."

The young fellows looked at each other. Still, the general opinion being against a duel which would seem like murder, they unanimously, Bonaparte concurring, declared that the boy must be satisfied with what Valence had said, for it represented their opinion. Louis retired, pale with anger, and sulkily refused to speak to his "great friend," who, he said with imperturbable gravity, had sacrificed his honor.

The next day, while the Grands were receiving their lesson in mathematics, Louis slipped into the recitation room, and at the moment when Valence was making a demonstration on the blackboard, the boy approached him, jumped on a stool to be able to reach his face, and returned him the slap he had given the night before.

"There!" said he; "now we are quits, and I have your

excuses to boot. As for me, I sha'n't make any; you need n't trouble about that."

The scandal was great. The deed was done in presence of the professor, who was obliged to make his report to the governor of the school, the Marquis Tiburce Valence. The marquis, knowing nothing of the antecedents of the case, sent for the delinquent, and after giving him a terrible lecture, told him he was no longer a member of the school, and that he must be ready that very day to return to his mother at Bourg. Louis replied that he could pack his things in ten minutes and be out of the school in fifteen. Of the blow he had himself received, he said not a word.

The answer seemed more than disrespectful to the marquis, who was greatly inclined to send the irreverent youth to the dungeons for a week; but he reflected that it would be impossible to imprison him and expel him both. So a man was appointed to watch the boy and not leave him for a moment until he had put him into the coach for Mâcon; Madame de Montrevel was to be notified in time to meet him on his arrival.

Bonaparte happened to see the boy followed by his keeper, and asked him an explanation of the sort of constabulary guard attached to him.

"I would tell you if you were still my friend," said the boy; "but you are not. Why disturb yourself about any thing that happens to me, whether good or evil?"

Bonaparte made a sign to the keeper, who, while Louis was packing his little trunk, came to the door of the room and spoke to him. He then found out that the boy was expelled. The step was serious; it would fill a whole family with distress, and possibly ruin the future of his young comrade. With that rapidity of decision which was one of the characteristic signs of his organization, he resolved to ask an audience of the governor, meantime requesting the keeper not to hasten Louis' departure. Bonaparte was an excellent pupil, much beloved in the

school and much esteemed by the governor. His request was immediately complied with. When ushered into the governor's presence he told him all, and without blaming Valence he tried to excuse Louis.

"Are you sure that what you tell me is so, monsieur?" asked the governor.

"Inquire of your nephew himself. I will abide by what he says."

Valence was sent for. He had already heard of Louis' expulsion, and was on his way to tell his uncle what had really happened. His account confirmed that of young Bonaparte.

"Very good," said the governor. "Louis shall not leave the school, but you will. You are old enough now to enter the service." Then ringing the bell, "Bring me the list of the vacant sub-lieutenancies," he said to the orderly.

That same day an urgent request was made to the ministry for an appointment, and that same night Valence departed to join his regiment. He went to say good-bye to Louis, whom he embraced half-willingly, half-unwillingly, while Bonaparte grasped his hand. The boy received the embrace reluctantly.

"That's all very well for the present," he said; "but if we ever meet again with swords by our sides —" A threatening gesture ended the speech.

Bonaparte received his own appointment as sub-lieutenant October 10, 1785. His was one of the fifty-eight commissions which Louis XVI. signed for the *École Militaire*. Eight years later, November 15, 1796, Bonaparte, commanding the Army of Italy at the Bridge of Arcola, which was defended by two regiments of Croats and two cannon, seeing the grape-shot and the musket-balls mowing down his ranks, feeling that victory was slipping through his fingers, and alarmed at the hesitation of his bravest troops, suddenly wrenched the tri-color from the stiffening fingers of a dying color-bearer and sprang upon

the bridge crying out: "Soldiers! are you no longer the men of Lodi?" As he did so, a young lieutenant sprang past him and covered him with his body.

This was far from pleasing Bonaparte; he wished to go first. Had it been possible, he would fain have gone alone. He caught the young man by the flap of his coat and pulling him back said: "Citizen, you are only a lieutenant; I am the commander-in-chief. I have the right of way."

"Too true," replied the other; and he followed Bonaparte instead of preceding him.

That evening, learning that two Austrian divisions had been cut to pieces, and seeing the two thousand prisoners whom he had taken, together with the cannon and the flags, Bonaparte remembered the young lieutenant who had sprung in front of him when there seemed nothing but death before them.

"Berthier," he said, "give orders to my aide-de-camp Valence to find a young lieutenant of grenadiers with whom I had an affair this morning on the bridge at Arcola."

"General," said Berthier, stammering, "Valence is wounded."

"I remember now, I have not seen him to-day. Where was he wounded, and how, — on the battlefield?"

"No, general; he had a quarrel yesterday and was run through the body."

Bonaparte frowned.

"They know very well I do not like duels; a soldier's blood is not his own, it belongs to France. Give the order to Muiron, then."

"He is killed, general."

"To Elliot, in that case."

"Killed also."

Bonaparte pulled a handkerchief from his pocket and wiped his forehead, which was bathed in sweat.

"Whom you can then; but I must see that lieutenant."

He dared not name another of his staff, fearing to hear again that fatal "Killed."

Half an hour later a young lieutenant was ushered into the tent, where a single lamp was casting a feeble light.

"Come nearer, lieutenant," said Bonaparte.

The young man made three steps and came within the radius of the light.

"Was it you who tried to pass me on the bridge this morning?" said Bonaparte.

"General, it was a bet I had made," replied the young man, gayly; his voice made the general start.

"Did I cause you to lose it?"

"Perhaps yes, perhaps no."

"What was the bet?"

"That I should be made a captain to-day."

"You have won it."

"Thank you, general."

And the young man darted forward as if to press Bonaparte's hand, but checked himself, and immediately stepped back. The lamp had lighted his face during that brief instant, and that instant had sufficed to make the general take notice of the face, as he already had taken notice of the voice. Neither the one nor the other seemed unknown to him. He searched his memory for a moment, but finding it rebellious said:—

"I know you."

"Possibly, general."

"I am certain of it; only I cannot remember your name."

"You have so managed matters, general, that no one can forget yours."

"Who are you?"

"Ask Valence, general."

Bonaparte gave a cry of joy.

"Louis de Montrevel!" he exclaimed; and he opened wide his arms. This time the young lieutenant did not hesitate to fling himself into them.

“Good,” said Bonaparte. “You will serve eight days with the regiment in your new rank; so that they may get accustomed to see you with your captain’s epaulets; after that you will take the place of my poor Muiron as aide-de-camp. Go!”

“Once more!” said the young man, opening his arms.

“Faith, yes!” cried Bonaparte, joyfully. Then, holding him fast to him after kissing him twice, he said: “Was it you who ran Valence through the body?”

“Don’t you remember, general? — you were there when I promised it to him. A soldier keeps his word.”

Eight days later Captain Montrevel was doing duty as a staff officer to the commander-in-chief, who changed his name of Louis, then in bad odor, to that of Roland.

Roland — no one would have dared to call him Louis after Bonaparte had rebaptized him — made the campaign of Italy with his general, and returned with him to Paris after the peace of Campo Formio. When the Egyptian expedition was decided on, Roland, who at that time was with his mother, after the death of his father, Brigadier-general Montrevel, killed on the Rhine while his son was fighting on the Adige and the Mincio, — Roland was among the first officers appointed by Bonaparte to take part in the useless but poetic crusade he was then planning. The young man left his mother, sister, and little brother at Bourg, General de Montrevel’s native town. They lived at Les Noires-Fontaines, a charming house called a château, about two miles from the town, surrounded by a farm and several hundred acres of land, which yielded a rental of six or eight thousand francs a year and constituted the entire fortune of the family. Roland’s departure on this adventurous expedition was a great grief to the poor widow. The death of the father seemed to forewarn her of the death of the son; and Madame de Montrevel, a gentle, tender creole, was far from having the stern virtues of a Spartan or Lacedemonian mother.

Bonaparte, who loved his old schoolmate of the École

Militaire with all his heart, had given him permission to rejoin the staff at the last moment at Toulon. But the fear of arriving too late prevented Roland from profiting by the kindness to its full extent. He left his mother, promising her not to expose himself unnecessarily, and arrived at Toulon eight days before the fleet set sail.

It is not our intention to tell here the tale of the campaign of Egypt, having already told it at some length elsewhere. On the 16th of May, 1798, Bonaparte and his whole staff sailed for the Orient; on the 15th of June the Knights of Malta gave up the keys of their citadel. July 2 the army disembarked on the Mussulman coast and the same day took Alexandria; the 25th Bonaparte entered Cairo after defeating the Mameluks at Chebreïss and the Pyramids. During this succession of marches and fights Roland had been the officer that we know him, — brave, gay, witty, defying the scorching heat of the sun and the icy dew of the nights, flinging himself like a hero or a fool among the Turkish sabres or the Bedouin balls. During the forty days of the voyage from Toulon he had scarcely left the side of the interpreter, Ventura, so that with his wonderful facility he had not only learned to speak Arabic fluently, but could make himself thoroughly understood in that language. It therefore happened that, when the general for any reason did not wish to use the native interpreter, Roland was charged with certain special communications to the muftis, ulemas, and sheiks.

During the night of October 20 and 21 Cairo revolted. At five in the morning the death of General Dupuy, killed by a lance, was made known. At eight, just as the riot was thought to be quelled, an aide-de-camp of the dead general rode up announcing that a party of Bedouins from the interior were attacking the Bab el Nasr and the gate of Victory.

Bonaparte was at that moment breakfasting with his aide-de-camp Sulkowski, grievously wounded at Salahieh. The general, forgetting in his eagerness the condition of

the young Pole, said to him: "Sulkowski, take fifteen of the Guides and go and see what those scoundrels want."

Sulkowski rose.

"General," said Roland, "send me; don't you see that Sulkowski can hardly stand?"

"True," said Bonaparte. "Do you go."

Roland went out, took the fifteen Guides, and started.

But the order had been given to Sulkowski, and Sulkowski was determined to execute it. He started with half a dozen men whom he found ready. Whether by chance, or whether it was that he knew the streets of Cairo better than Roland, he reached the gate of Victory a few seconds before him. When Roland arrived he saw six dead men and the body of an officer being carried away by the Arabs. Arabs will sometimes, while pitilessly massacring soldiers, spare the lives of officers in hopes of a ransom. Roland recognized Sulkowski; and pointing him out with his sabre to his fifteen men he charged after the Arabs at a gallop.

Half an hour later, one man of that party returned alone to headquarters and announced the death of Sulkowski and Roland and their twenty followers. Bonaparte, as we have said, loved Roland as a brother, as a son, as he loved Eugène. He wished to know all the details of the catastrophe and questioned the survivor himself. The man had seen an Arab cut off Sulkowski's head and hang it to his saddlebow. As for Roland, his horse had been killed; he had disengaged his feet from the stirrups and fought a few moments standing. But he soon disappeared in the smoke of a volley fired upon him at close quarters.

Bonaparte sighed, shed a tear, murmured "Another!" and seemed to think no more about it. He did, however, inquire to what tribe of Arabs these Bedouins belonged; and was told that they were an independent tribe living in a village about thirty miles distant from Cairo. Bonaparte let them alone for a month, that they might rely on

their impunity. Then he ordered one of his aides-de-camp, named Croisier, to surround the village, destroy the huts, cut the heads off the men and put them in sacks, and bring the women and children to Cairo. Croisier executed the order punctually. A population of women and children were brought to Cairo and also one living Arab, bound and gagged and tied to his horse.

"Why did you bring a living man?" asked Bonaparte. "I told you to cut off the head of every man who could bear arms."

"General," said Croisier, who himself had picked up a little Arabic. "Just as I was about to order that man's head cut off, I understood him to offer to exchange a prisoner's life for his. I thought it would be time enough to cut his head off later and I had better bring him with me. If I am not mistaken the ceremony can take place here just as well as there; what is postponed is not abandoned."

Bonaparte sent for Ventura and questioned the Bedouin. He replied that he had saved the life of a French officer seriously wounded at the gate of Victory; that this officer spoke Arabic and said he was aide-de-camp to General Bonaparte. The man then told how he had sent the officer to his brother who was a famous doctor in an adjoining village; the officer, he said, was now a prisoner in that village, and he would, if his life were promised to him, write to his brother to send the prisoner back to Cairo.

Possibly the tale was invented to gain time, but it might be true; nothing was lost by waiting. The Arab was placed in safe keeping; a scribe was brought to write at his dictation. He sealed the letter with his seal and an Arab belonging to Cairo started to negotiate the exchange. If he succeeded the reward was to be the life of the Bedouin and five hundred piastres for the messenger.

Three days later the emissary returned bringing Roland. Bonaparte had hoped for this result, but dared not expect it. That iron heart, which had seemed insensible to pain,

now melted with joy. He opened his arms to Roland as on the day when he recovered him at Arcola, and tears, two pearls, — the tears of Bonaparte were rare indeed, — fell from his eyes.

As often happens to those who brave fire and sword, fire and sword miraculously avoided Roland. Before and behind him men fell; but he remained erect, invulnerable as the demon of war. During the campaign in Syria flags of truce were twice sent to summon Djézzar Pacha to surrender Saint-Jean-d'Acre. Neither of the bearers returned; their heads were cut off. A third was to be sent. Roland applied for the duty, obtained the general's permission, went, and returned in safety. He took part in each of the nineteen assaults upon the fortress; at each assault he was seen in the breach. He was one of ten men who forced their way into the Accursèd Tower; nine remained, but he came back without a scratch. At Aboukir he flung himself into the mêlée, reached the pacha by forcing his way through the guard of blacks who surrounded him, and received the fire of both his pistols. One burned the wadding only; the other shot passed under Roland's arm and killed the soldier behind him.

When Bonaparte determined to return to France Roland was the first to whom he revealed that intention. As they crossed the Mediterranean near Corsica the English fleet hove in sight. Bonaparte had declared to Admiral Gantheaume that he would fight to the death, and he gave orders to blow the ship up if necessary, sooner than haul down the flag. He passed, however, through the British fleet in the night-time without being seen, and landed at Fréjus October 8, 1799. He sent Eugène, Berthier, Bourrienne, his aides-de-camp, and suite, by the road through Gap and Draguignan; while he himself, in citizen's dress, and strictly incognito, took the road by Aix, accompanied only by Roland, that he might judge for himself as to the feeling of the South.

On arriving at Aix he announced to Roland that they

would part at Lyon, for he gave him three weeks' furlough in which to visit his mother and sister. We already know how they reached Avignon and what happened there; and we have seen with what profound contempt for danger Roland provoked a duel, and what were the results.

And now, as we have said, Sir John and he were sleeping, or appearing to sleep, in the Englishman's luxurious carriage drawn by two horses at full speed along the road from Avignon to Orange.

VI.

MORGAN.

OUR readers must permit us to abandon for a time Sir John Tanlay and Roland, who, thanks to the moral and physical condition in which we left them, need inspire no anxiety, while we turn our attention seriously to a personage who has, so far, made but a brief appearance in this history, though he is destined to fill a large place in it.

We speak of the man who entered the dining-room of the inn at Avignon, masked and armed, to return to Jean Picot the two hundred louis which were mixed with the government money and taken from the diligence by mistake. The bold bandit, who called himself Morgan, had ridden into Avignon, masked, in broad daylight. He had left his horse at the door of the inn, and as if the horse had enjoyed in that pontifical and royalist town the same immunity as its master, he found it again when he came out, unfastened its bridle, sprang into the saddle, rode through the Porte d'Oulle and disappeared at full gallop along the high road to Lyon. Only once, about three quarters of a mile from Avignon, he slackened speed to gather his mantle closer about him, hide his weapons, and take off his mask, which he slipped into one of the holsters of his saddle.

The persons he left behind him at Avignon, who were puzzled to decide if this could indeed be the terrible Morgan, the terror of the South, might have convinced themselves with their own eyes, had they met him on the road between Avignon and Bédarides, whether the appearance

of the famous bandit was really as terrifying as his fame. We do not hesitate to say that the features he now presented would have seemed to them so little in harmony with the idea that their prejudiced imagination had concocted that their amazement and stupefaction would have been extreme.

The removal of the mask, done by a hand of perfect delicacy and whiteness, revealed the face of a young man scarcely twenty-five years of age, — a face that had something of the character of a woman's, so regular were the features and so gentle their expression. One only point, however, gave it, or rather would give it at certain moments, a character of singular firmness: beneath the beautiful fair hair waving on the forehead and temples, as the fashion was in those days, the eyebrows, eyes, and lashes were black as ebony. The rest of the face, as we have said, was almost feminine. There were two small ears, the tips of which could just be seen below the tufts of hair on either side of the face to which the Incroyables of the day gave the name of "dog's-ears;" a straight and well-proportioned nose; a rather large mouth, rosy and always smiling, and which, when smiling, showed a double row of brilliant teeth; a refined and delicate chin, with a faint tinge of blue upon it, showing that if the beard had not been carefully and recently shaved it would, protesting against the golden color of the hair, have followed that of the brows and eyes and lashes. As for the figure of the unknown man, it was seen, as he entered the dining-room of the inn, to be tall, well set-up, flexible, and denoting, if not great muscular strength, at least great suppleness and agility.

The manner in which he sat his horse showed the ease of a practised rider. With his cloak thrown back from the shoulders, his mask hidden in the holster, his hat pulled down over his eyes, he now resumed his rapid pace (checked for a moment), passed through Bédarides at a gallop, and reaching the first houses in Orange entered

the gates of one of them, which closed immediately behind him. A servant was in waiting, who took the horse by the bit. The rider rapidly dismounted.

"Is your master here?" he inquired.

"No, monsieur le comte," answered the man. "He was obliged to go away last night, but he told me, if monsieur came and asked for him, to say that he had gone on business for the Company."

"Very good, Baptiste. I have brought back his horse in good condition, though a little tired; wash him with wine and give him, for two or three days, barley instead of oats. He has done nearly a hundred miles since yesterday morning."

"M. le comte was satisfied with him?"

"Quite satisfied. Is the carriage ready?"

"Yes, monsieur le comte; all harnessed in the coach-house. The postilion is drinking with Julien. Monsieur ordered that he should be kept away from the house so that he should not see him arrive."

"He thinks it is your master whom he takes?"

"Yes, monsieur le comte. Here is my master's passport, with which we got post-horses; and as my master has gone the Bordeaux way with M. le comte's passport, and M. le comte is going the Geneva way with my master's passport, we think the skein will be so tangled that those damned gendarmes, clever as their fingers are, can't unravel it."

"Take off the valise that is on the croup of the saddle and give it to me, Baptiste."

Baptiste began to obey; but the valise almost slipped from his hands.

"Ha! ha!" he cried, laughing. "M. le comte did not warn me. The devil! M. le comte has n't wasted his time, it seems."

"You are mistaken, Baptiste. If I have n't lost all my time I have lost a good deal of it, so that I must now be off as fast as I can."

"But won't M. le comte breakfast?"

"I'll eat a mouthful — quickly."

"Monsieur shall not be kept waiting; it is half-past two, and breakfast has been ready since twelve. Luckily it is a cold breakfast."

And Baptiste, in the absence of his master, did the honors of the house to the visitor, and started to precede him to the dining-room.

"Never mind," said the count; "I know the way. Go and attend to the carriage; let it be close to the house, with the door wide open, so that when I come out I can jump right into it without the postilion seeing me. Here's enough to pay him for the first relay."

And the stranger gave Baptiste a handful of assignats.

"Why, monsieur," said the man, "here's enough to pay all the way to Lyon."

"Pay as far as Valence, under pretence that I want to sleep, and keep the rest for your trouble in making out the accounts."

"Shall I put the valise under the seat?"

"No, I'll take it myself."

Taking the valise from the servant's hand without letting it be seen that it weighed heavily, he walked toward the dining-room, while Baptiste made his way to a neighboring tavern to call the postilion and count his assignats.

As the stranger had said, the way was familiar to him, for he passed down a corridor, opened without hesitation the first door, then a second, and found himself before a table elegantly served. A chicken, two partridges, and cold ham, several kinds of cheese, a dessert of magnificent fruit, and two decanters, one containing wine of a rich ruby color, the other like topaz, made a breakfast which, though evidently intended for one person only, as only one place was laid, might, in case of need, have sufficed for three or four.

The first act of the young man on entering the dining-room was to go straight to a mirror, take off his hat, and

arrange his hair with a little comb which he took from his pocket; after which he went to a porcelain basin with a reservoir above it, took a towel, which was there for the purpose, and washed his face and hands. It was not until after he had attended to these little niceties — characteristic of a man of elegant habits — that he sat down to table.

A few moments sufficed to satisfy his appetite, to which, however, youth and fatigue gave magnificent proportions; and when Baptiste came in to announce that the carriage was ready he found the stranger afoot and waiting. The latter pulled his hat again over his eyes, wrapped his cloak about him, took the valise under his arm, and as Baptiste had taken pains to bring the steps of the carriage as close as possible to the door, he sprang into the vehicle instantly without being seen by the postilion. Baptiste slammed the door; then, addressing the man in top-boots, —

“All is paid to Valence, is n’t it, — relays and fees?” he asked.

“Yes, all; do you want a receipt?” answered the postilion, joking.

“No; but my master, the Marquis de Ribier, does n’t want to be disturbed till he gets to Valence.”

“Very good,” replied the postilion in the same bantering tone; “no one shall disturb the citizen marquis. Houp-là!”

And he woke up his horses and snapped his whip with that noisy eloquence which says to both neighbors and passers-by, “Out of the way, out of the way, there! I’m driving a man who pays well and has a right to run over others.”

Once in the carriage, the pretended Marquis de Ribier opened the window, pulled down the shades, raised the seat, put his valise in the hollow beneath it, sat down again, wrapped his cloak around him, and, certain of not being waked till he reached Valence, slept as he had eaten, that is to say, with the appetite of youth.

They went from Orange to Valence in eight hours, and

not long before entering the town our traveller woke up. He cautiously lifted a blind and saw that he was passing through the village of La Paillasse. It was dark; he struck his repeater and found it was eleven at night. Thinking it useless to go to sleep again, he added up the cost of the relays to Lyon and got out the money. When the postilion at Valence met the comrade who took his place the traveller heard him say: —

“I think he’s a *ci-devant*; but he came recommended from Orange and as he pays twenty-sous fees you must treat him as you would a patriot.”

“Good!” said the other; “he shall be driven accordingly.”

The traveller thought the time had come to speak. He raised the blind and said: —

“You’ll only do me justice. A patriot? Bless my soul! I boast of being one, and first calibre, too! and the proof is — Here! take that and drink to the health of the Republic!” and he gave an assignat of a hundred sous to the postilion who had recommended him to his comrade. “And the same to you,” he continued, addressing the new man, “if you give to the others the same recommendation you have just received.”

“Oh, you need n’t fear, citizen; there will be but one order to Lyon, — full speed!”

“Here is the money for the sixteen posts in advance, including the double post of entrance. I pay twenty-sous fees; settle that among yourselves.”

The postilion sprang into his saddle, and they started at full gallop. The carriage relayed at Lyon about four in the afternoon. While the horses were being put to, a man dressed as a porter, and sitting with his stretcher behind him on a stone post, rose, came up to the carriage, and said something in a low voice to its occupant which seemed to astonish him greatly.

“Are you quite sure?” he said to the porter.

“I tell you that I saw him with my own eyes.”

"Then I can tell it to our friends as a positive fact?"

"You can. Only, make haste."

"Are the servants notified at Servas?"

"Yes; you'll find a horse ready between Servas and Sue."

The postilion came up. The young man exchanged a look with the porter, who walked away as if charged to mail a letter.

"What road, citizen?" asked the postilion.

"To Bourg; I want to reach Servas by nine o'clock. I pay thirty-sous fees."

"Forty-two miles in five hours! that's tough. However, it can be done."

"Will you do it?"

"We'll try to."

And the postilion started at full gallop.

Nine o'clock was striking as they entered Servas.

"A crown of six francs if you'll not change horses here, and will take me half-way to Sue," cried the young man through the window to the postilion.

"Very good," said the latter.

And the carriage passed the post-house without stopping. Half a mile beyond Servas Morgan put his head out of the window, made a trumpet of his hands and gave the cry of a screech-owl. The imitation was so perfect that another owl answered from the woods.

"Here's the place; stop here!" cried Morgan to the postilion, who immediately pulled up.

The young man took his valise, opened the carriage-door, and jumped out. Approaching the postilion, he gave him the promised crown of six francs. The postilion took the coin and stuck it into the hollow of his eye, as a fop in our day holds his eyeglass. Morgan knew that this pantomime had a meaning.

"Well," he said, "what is that for?"

"To let you know," said the postilion, "that, do as I will, I can't help seeing with one eye."

"I understand," said the young man, laughing; "and if I close the other eye —"

"Damn it! I sha'n't see anything."

"Hey! you are a queer fellow, who would rather be blind of both eyes than see with one. Well, I don't dispute tastes. Here!"

And he gave him a second crown. The postilion made a motion to stick it in the other eye, wheeled the carriage round, and took the road back to Servas.

The Companion of Jehu waited till the sound of the wheels died away. Then putting the hollow of a key to his lips, he drew a long trembling sound from it, like that from a boatswain's whistle.

A similar sound answered him, and immediately after a horseman issued from the woods at full gallop. As he caught sight of him, Morgan hastily put on his mask.

"In whose name have you come here?" asked the rider, whose face could not be seen, hidden as it was by the immense brim of his hat.

"In the name of the prophet Elisha," replied the young man.

"Then it is you I am waiting for;" and he got off his horse.

"Are you prophet or disciple?" asked Morgan.

"Disciple."

"Where is your master?"

"You will find him in the Chartreuse of Seillon."

"Do you know how many Companions are there to-night?"

"Twelve."

"Very good; if you meet others send them to the rendezvous."

The man who had called himself a disciple bowed in sign of obedience, helped Morgan to fasten his valise to the croup of the saddle, and held the horse by the bit respectfully, while the young man mounted. Without even waiting to put his other foot in the stirrup Morgan

spurred the horse, which tore the bit from the servant's hand and started at full gallop.

On the right of the road lay the forest of Seillon like a sea of darkness, the sombre waves of which were undulating and moaning to the sweep of the night wind. Half a mile beyond Sue the rider turned his horse across country toward the forest, which, as he rode on, seemed to be approaching him. The horse, guided by a practised hand, plunged into the woods without hesitating. Ten minutes later horse and rider emerged on the other side.

About a hundred feet from the wood rose a gloomy mass, isolated, apparently, in the middle of a plain. It was a building of massive architecture, shaded by five or six venerable trees. The horseman stopped before the portal, above which were placed three statues in triangle: of the Virgin, our Lord, and John the Baptist. The statue of the Virgin was at the apex of the triangle.

The mysterious traveller had reached the end of his journey, for this was the Chartreuse of Seillon. This monastery, the twenty-second of its order, was founded in 1178. In 1672 a modern building had been substituted for the old convent. Vestiges of this last building can be seen to this day. They are, externally, the portal we have mentioned with the three statues; internally, a small chapel, entered from the right after passing through the portal.

A peasant, his wife, and two children are now living there, and the old monastery has become a farmhouse. In 1791 the monks were expelled; in 1792 the convent and all its dependencies were offered for sale as ecclesiastical property. The dependencies were, first, the park surrounding the buildings, and next, the noble forest which still goes by the name of the forest of Seillon. But at Bourg — a royalist and above all a religious town — no one risked his soul by purchasing property belonging to worthy monks whom

they all revered. Thus it happened that the convent park, and forest had become, under the title of national domain, the property of the Republic, — that is to say, they belonged to nobody; or, at any rate, they were deserted, the Republic having, for the last seven years, had something else to think of than pointing walls, cultivating orchards, and cutting timber regularly.

For seven years, therefore, the Chartreuse was completely abandoned; and if by chance any curious eyes looked through the keyhole of its great gate, they saw the grass growing in the courtyards like the brambles in the orchard, and the brush in the forest, which, except for one road which crossed it and one or two paths, had now become impenetrable. A species of pavilion, called La Correrie, belonging to the monastery and distant from it about two thirds of a mile, was buried and overgrown with moss in these tangled woods, which were profiting by their freedom to grow at their own sweet will, and had long since wrapped the pavilion in a mantle of foliage which hid it from sight.

The strangest rumors were current about these buildings. It was said they were haunted by guests, invisible in the daytime, horrible to behold at night. Woodsmen or belated peasants, who sometimes went into the forest to exercise against the Republic the privileges the town of Bourg had always enjoyed under the monks, declared that they had seen, through the chinks of the closed blinds flames of fire running along the corridors and up the stairs, and had heard distinctly the sound of chains being dragged over the pavement of the cloisters and courtyards. The stronger-minded of the inhabitants denied all this; but two very opposite sets of opinion were against the unbelievers, — the patriots declaring that the ghosts were the souls of the poor monks buried alive by the tyranny of convent rule in the *in pace*, who were now dragging about the fetters they had worn in life, calling down the vengeance of heaven on their persecutors; the royalists, on the other

hand, said they were the imps of the devil himself, who finding an empty convent and no further danger from holy water, were boldly keeping their orgies where once they would never have dared to put a claw. One fact, however, left everything uncertain: not a single person among the unbelievers or the believers (whether they held to the souls of the martyred monks, or to the witches' sabbath of Beelzebub) had ever dared to risk himself among those shadows, or to come in the solemn hours of the night and find out the truth, so as to tell the neighborhood on the following day whether or not the monastery were haunted, and if haunted, by whom.

But no doubt these tales, whether well-founded or not, had no influence on our mysterious horseman; for though, as we have said, nine o'clock had rung from the steeples at Bourg, and the night was dark, he stopped his horse in front of the great portal, and, without dismounting, pulled a pistol from the holster and gave three raps with its pommel on the door, after the manner of the free-masons. Then he listened. For a moment he doubted if the meeting were really there; for closely as he looked, attentively as he listened, he could see no light and hear no noise. But presently he fancied that a cautious step was approaching the door. He knocked a second time in the same manner.

"Who knocks?" said a voice.

"One from Elisha," was the answer.

"What king do the sons of Isaac obey?"

"Jehu."

"What house must they exterminate?"

"That of Ahab."

"Are you prophet, or disciple?"

"Prophet."

"Welcome to the house of the Lord!" said the voice.

The iron bars which secured the massive door swung back, the bolts grated in their sockets; half of the great gate silently opened, and horse and rider passed

in beneath the portal, which was instantly closed behind them.

The individual who had opened this gate — so slow to open, so quick to close — was clothed in the long white robe of a Chartreux monk, the hood of which falling over his head entirely concealed his face.

VII.

THE CHARTREUSE OF SEILLON.

No doubt, like the first "disciple" met on the road to Sue by the man who styled himself "prophet," the monk who had opened the gate was of secondary rank in the fraternity; for he now grasped the bridle of the horse and held him while the rider dismounted, doing for the young man the service of a groom.

Morgan got down, took off the valise, pulled the pistols from the holsters and put them in his belt next to those already there; and then, addressing the monk in a tone of command, he said:—

"I thought I should find the brothers assembled in council."

"They have assembled," replied the monk.

"Where?"

"In La Correrie. Suspicious persons have been seen about the Chartreuse, and orders have been issued to take the greatest precautions."

The young man shrugged his shoulders, as if he considered all such precautions useless, and in the same tone of command he said:—

"Let some one take the horse to the stable, and show me yourself the way to the council."

The monk called another brother, to whom he flung the bridle. Then he lit a torch at a lamp in the little chapel which can still be seen to the right of the great portal, and walked in front of the new-comer. He crossed the cloister, made a few steps into the garden, opened a door leading to a sort of reservoir, invited Morgan to enter, closed it as

carefully as he had closed the front door, touched with his foot a stone which seemed to be accidentally lying there, and disclosed a ring, by which he raised a paving-stone which covered a flight of steps. These steps led down to a passage with a rounded roof, wide enough to admit two men abreast. The two men walked along silently for some five or six minutes, and then they paused before a grated iron door. The monk drew a key from his frock and opened it. Then, when both had passed through and the door was locked behind them, the monk said: —

“By what name shall I announce you?”

“As Brother Morgan.”

“Wait here; I shall be back in five minutes.”

The young man made a sign which proved that he was familiar with such distrust and all the present precautions. Then he seated himself on a tomb — the place was one of the mortuary vaults of the convent — and waited. Five minutes had scarcely elapsed when the monk reappeared.

“Follow me,” he said; “the brothers are glad you have come. They feared some misfortune had happened to you.”

A few seconds later Morgan was introduced into the council chamber.

Twelve monks were awaiting him with their hoods drawn down over their eyes. But as soon as the door was closed and the serving brother had disappeared, and Morgan himself was removing his mask, all the hoods were thrown back and the face of each monk was exposed.

No brotherhood ever showed a more brilliant assemblage of handsome and joyous young men. Two or three only of these strange monks had reached the age of forty. All hands were held out to Morgan, and several hearty embraces were given to him.

“I declare to you,” said the one who had welcomed him most tenderly, “you have drawn a cruel thorn out of my foot; we thought you dead, or, at any rate, a prisoner.”

“Dead I might be, but prisoner never, Amiet. The

whole affair was conducted on both sides with touching amenity. As soon as the conductor saw us he called to the postilion to stop; I think he added, 'I know what it is.' 'Well,' said I, 'if you know what it is, my good friend, no need for explanations.' 'The government money?' he asked. 'Exactly,' I replied. Then, as a great fuss was going on inside the carriage, I added, 'First of all, dismount, and go and tell those gentlemen, but particularly those ladies, that we are well-behaved persons who will not meddle with them, — the ladies, you understand; and that nobody will be even looked at unless they put their heads out of the window.' One of them risked it, though; and I give my word she was a beauty. I blew her a kiss, and she gave a little cry and drew back into the coach, — for all the world like Galatea, — but as there were no willows about, I did n't pursue her. During this time the conductor was searching his strong-box in all haste; in fact, in such haste, that in addition to the government money he gave me two hundred louis belonging to a poor wine-merchant of Bordeaux."

"The devil!" exclaimed the brother called Amiet, — a name which was probably, like that of Morgan, assumed, — "that is annoying! You know the Directory, with brilliant inspiration, has organized companies of 'chauffeurs,' who attack the coaches in our name in order to make people believe we meddle with private persons, — in other words, that we are robbers."

"Now wait," said Morgan; "that is just what makes me so late. I had heard something of what you say at Lyon. I was half-way to Valence before I found out the mistake. That was not very difficult, for the worthy man, as if foreseeing what would happen, had labelled the package, 'Jean Picot, wine-merchant, Bordeaux.'"

"And you sent it back to him?"

"I did better; I took it to him."

"At Fronsac?"

"Oh, no! at Avignon. I felt certain that so careful a

man would stop at the first large town he came to and inquire his chances of getting back his money. I was not mistaken. I inquired at the hôtel if they knew a man named Jean Picot. They replied that they not only knew him, but he was just then dining at the table d'hôte. I went in. You can imagine they were all talking about the stoppage of the diligence. Conceive the effect of my apparition! The god of antiquity issuing from the machine did not produce a more unexpected finale. I asked which of the guests was named Jean Picot. The one who bore that distinguished and melodious name acknowledged it. I laid before him his two hundred louis with many apologies for the anxiety we, The Company of Jehu, had caused him. I exchanged a glance with Barjols and a polite nod with the Abbé de Rians, who were both there; I made a profound bow to the company, and off I came. It was n't much to do, but it took me fifteen hours; that's why I am so late. I thought I had better be late than leave upon our traces a real cause for a false opinion of us. Did I do right, brothers?"

The company burst forth into bravos.

"Only," said one, "I think it was imprudent of you to carry the money yourself to Jean Picot."

"My dear colonel," said the young man, "there's an Italian proverb which says, 'Who wills, goes; who wills not, sends.' I willed and I went."

"And you've made a jovial friend, who if you fall into the hands of the Directory, will recognize you out of gratitude; and recognition will mean cutting your head off."

"Oh! I'll defy him to recognize me."

"How can you prevent it?"

"Do you suppose I play such pranks with my face uncovered? My dear colonel, you mistake me for some one else. I take my mask off among friends, and that's all right; but among strangers — No, no; I am not so foolish. Are not these carnival times? I don't see why I should n't disguise myself as Abellino or Karl Moor

when Messieurs Gohier, Sieyès, Roger Ducos, Barras, and Moulins are masquerading as kings of France."

"Did you enter the town masked?"

"The town, the hotel, and the dining-room. It is true that though my face was well covered, my belt was not, and, as you see, it was well garnished."

The young man made a movement which tossed aside his cloak and showed his belt, in which four pistols were stuck, and from which hung a hunting-knife. Then, with that gayety which seems a dominant characteristic of such careless temperaments, he added:—

"I ought to look ferocious, ought n't I? They probably mistook me for the late Mandrin descending from the fastnesses of Savoie. By the bye, here are the sixty thousand francs of their Serene Highnesses the Directory." And the young man gave a disdainful kick to the valise, the bowels of which returned a metallic sound, indicating the presence of gold. Then he turned aside and mingled with the group of friends, from whom he had hitherto been separated by the natural distance between the narrator of a tale and his listeners.

One of the monks stooped and picked up the valise.

"Despise gold as much as you please, my dear Morgan, so long as that does not prevent you from capturing it; but I know worthy persons who are awaiting those sixty thousand francs that you kick disdainfully with as much impatience and anxiety as a caravan lost in the desert awaits the drop of water which is to save them from dying of thirst."

"Our friends in La Vendée, you mean," replied Morgan. "Much good will it do them! Egotists!—fighting, are they? Those gentlemen have chosen the roses, and left us the thorns. Ha! do you think they get nothing from England?"

"I know they do," said one of the monks, gayly; "at Quiberon they got bullets and grape-shot."

"I did not say from the English," returned Morgan. "I said from England."

“Not one penny.”

“But I think,” said one of the Company, who seemed to possess a more reflecting head than the rest of the fraternity, “I think our princes might send a little gold to those who are pouring out their blood for the monarchy. Are they not afraid that La Vendée will end by wearying of a devotion which up to this time has not received, so far as I know, one word of thanks?”

“La Vendée, my dear friend,” said Morgan, “is a generous land, and will never weary, believe me. Besides, where would be the merit of fidelity if it never had to deal with ingratitude. The moment devotion is met by gratitude it is no longer devotion. It becomes an exchange; it receives a return. Let us be faithful always, devoted always, praying Heaven to make those to whom we are devoted ungrateful, and then we shall bear, believe me, the noblest part of all in the history of our civil wars.”

Morgan had hardly uttered this chivalric axiom, expressive of a desire which had every chance of accomplishment, when three masonic blows were struck upon the door by which he had lately entered.

“Gentlemen,” said the monk who seemed to take the part of president, “put on your masks and hoods. We never know what may happen.”

VIII.

WHERE THE MONEY OF THE DIRECTORY WENT.

EVERY one hastened to obey. The monks lowered the hoods of their long robes over their faces; Morgan put on his mask.

"Come in," said the superior.

The door opened and the serving brother appeared.

"An emissary from General Georges Cadoudal asks admittance," he said.

"Did he reply to the pass-words?"

"Correctly."

"Then let him enter."

The serving-brother retired by the subterranean passage and reappeared a few moments later, conducting a man who was easily recognized by his costume to be a peasant, and by his square head with its shock of red hair to be a Breton. He advanced into the middle of the circle without appearing in the least intimidated, fixing his eyes on each of the monks in turn, and waiting until one or other of the twelve granite statues should break silence. The president was the first to speak.

"From whom do you come?"

"He who sent me," replied the peasant, "ordered me, in case I was asked that question, to say I was sent by Jehu."

"Are you bearer of a verbal or written message?"

"I am to answer the questions you put to me, and exchange a bit of paper for some money."

"Very good; now for the questions. What are the Brothers in La Vendée doing?"

"They have laid down their arms and are waiting a message from you before taking them up again."

"Why did they lay down their arms?"

"They received the order from his Majesty Louis XVIII."

"There is talk of a proclamation written by the king's own hand; has it been received?"

"Here is a copy."

The peasant gave a paper to the person who was questioning him. The latter opened it and read: —

The war has absolutely no result except that of making the monarchy odious and alarming. Kings who return to their own by bloody means are never loved; these means must therefore be abandoned; confidence must be placed in the triumph of Opinion, which invariably returns of itself to saving principles. "God and the king!" will soon be the rallying cry of all Frenchmen. The scattered elements of royalism must be gathered into one vast sheaf; Vendée must be abandoned to her unhappy fate and learn to walk in a more pacific and less erratic manner. The royalists of the West have done their full duty; those of Paris must now be relied on to bring about the approaching Restoration.

Here the president raised his head and looked at Morgan with a flash of the eye his hood could not wholly conceal.

"Brother," he said, "your wish appears to be accomplished. The royalists of La Vendée and the South will have all the merit of pure devotion."

Then, lowering his eyes to the proclamation, he continued to read on: —

The Jews crucified their king; and since that time they have been wanderers on the earth. The French have guillotined theirs, and they too shall be scattered through the universe.

Given at Blankenbourg, this 25th of August, 1799, on the day of Saint Louis and in the sixth year of our reign.

(Signed)

LOUIS.

The young men looked at each other.

"*Quos vult perdere Jupiter dementat,*" said Morgan.

"Yes," said the president; "but when those whom Jupiter wishes to destroy represent a principle, they must be sustained not only against Jupiter, but against themselves. Ajax, in the midst of the thunder and lightning, clung to a rock and threatening heaven with his clenched hand, he cried, 'I will escape in spite of all the gods!'" Then, turning to Cadoudal's messenger, he added:—

"What answer did he who sent you here make to that proclamation?"

"Very nearly what you have said yourself. He told me to come here and inform myself whether you determined to hold firm in spite of the king himself."

"By heaven, yes!" cried Morgan.

"We are determined," said the president.

"In that case," replied the peasant, "all is well. Here are the real names of the new chiefs, also their assumed names. The general advises you to use the latter as much as possible in your despatches. He takes that precaution in writing of you."

"Have you the list?" asked the president.

"No; I might have been stopped and the list taken from me. Write down the names yourself; I will dictate them."

The president seated himself at a table, took a pen and wrote, under the dictation of the Breton peasant, the following names:—

"Georges Cadoudal, *Jehu*, or *Roundhead*; Joseph Cadoudal, *Judas Maccabæus*; Lahaye Saint-Hilaire, *David*; Burban-Malabry, *Brave-la-mort*; Poulpiquez, *Royal-Carnage*; Bonfils, *Brise-Barrière*; Dampferné, *Piquevers*; Duchayla, *la Couronne*; Duparc, *le Terrible*; la Roche, *Mithridates*; Puisaye, *Jean le Blond*."

"And those are the successors of Charette, Stofflet, Cathelineau, Bonchamp, d'Elbée, Rochejaquelin, and Lescure!" cried a voice.

The Breton turned round to see who had spoken.

"If they get themselves killed like their predecessors," he said, "what more can you ask?"

“A fair question,” said Morgan; “so that —”

“So that,” interrupted the peasant, “as soon as our general knows your determination, he will take up arms.”

“And if our answer had been in the negative,” asked another voice, “what then?”

“So much the worse for you,” replied the peasant. “In any case, the insurrection is fixed for October 20.”

“Well then,” said the president, “thanks to us he will have the means to pay his army for one month. Where is your receipt?”

“Here,” said the peasant, drawing from his blouse a paper on which were written these words: —

Received of our Brothers in the South and East, to be employed for the Cause, the sum of . . .

GEORGES CADOUAL.

General commanding the royalist army of Brittany.

The sum was left blank.

“Do you know how to write?” asked the president.

“Enough to fill in those few missing words.”

“Well then, write, ‘one hundred thousand francs.’”

The Breton wrote as he was told. Then handing the paper to the president, he said: —

“There is the receipt; where is the money?”

“Stoop and pick up that bag at your feet; it contains sixty thousand francs.” Then, addressing one of the monks, he added, “Montbard, where are the other forty thousand?”

The monk thus addressed opened a closet and took therefrom a bag rather less well filled than the one that Morgan had brought in, but which contained, nevertheless, the good round sum of forty thousand francs.

“That makes up the total,” said the monk.

“Now, my friend,” said the president, “get something to eat, and rest yourself; to-morrow you will start on your return.”

“No, I am wanted over there,” said the Breton. “I

can eat, and sleep too, on horseback. Adieu, gentlemen; Heaven keep you!" So saying, he went toward the door by which he had entered.

"Wait," said Morgan.

The messenger stopped.

"News for news," continued Morgan. "Tell General Cadoudal that General Bonaparte has left the army in Egypt; he landed day before yesterday at Fréjus and will be in Paris in three days. My news is fully worth yours. What do you think of it?" he added, turning to the conclave.

"Impossible!" cried all the monks, with one voice.

"Yet nothing is more certain, gentlemen; I heard it from our friend Leprêtre, who saw him changing horses at Lyon one hour before me, and recognized him."

"What has he come for?" asked several voices.

"We shall know some day," said Morgan. "Perhaps he has only gone to Paris to keep out of sight."

"Don't lose a moment in carrying that news to our brothers in the West," said the president to the peasant. "A moment ago I wished to keep you; now I tell you to go, — and go quickly."

The peasant bowed and went out. The president waited till the door was closed.

"Gentlemen," he said, "the news that Morgan has brought is so serious that I shall propose a special measure."

"What is it?" asked The Company of Jehu, with one voice.

"It is that one of us, chosen by lot, shall go to Paris and keep the rest of us informed, with our secret cipher, of all that happens."

"Agreed!" they cried.

"In that case," resumed the president, "let us each write our name on a slip of paper, put the slips in a hat, and the first name drawn shall go."

The young men, one and all, went to the table, wrote

their names on squares of paper, which they rolled and threw into a hat. The youngest of them was told to draw. He drew one of the rolls and handed it to the president, who unfolded it.

"Morgan," he read.

"What are my instructions?" asked the young man.

"Remember," replied the president, with a solemnity to which the cloistral arches gave an added grandeur, "remember that you bear the name and title of Comte de Sainte-Hermine, that your father was guillotined on the place de la Révolution, and your brother killed in Condé's army. *Noblesse oblige*. Those are your instructions."

"And what else?" asked the young man.

"For the rest," said the president, "we rely on your principles and your loyalty."

"Then, my friends, allow me to say good-bye at once. I must start for Paris at dawn, and I have a visit I must pay before I go."

"Go," said the president, opening his arms. "I embrace you in the name of the Brotherhood. To another I should say, Be brave, persevering, active; to you I say, Be prudent!"

The young man accepted the fraternal embrace, smiled to his friends, shook hands with two or three of them, wrapped his cloak about him, pulled his hat over his eyes, and departed.

IX.

ROMEO AND JULIET.

MORGAN'S horse had already, under the possibility of immediate departure, been washed, rubbed down, dried, and fed with a double ration of oats. It was now standing ready, saddled and bridled, and the young man had only to ask for it. He was no sooner in the saddle than the gate opened as if by magic; the horse sprang forth eagerly, forgetting his first trip and ready to make another.

Morgan paused for a moment undecided whether to turn to the right or the left. He finally turned to the right, followed for a few moments the path which led from Bourg to Seillon, then turned again to the right, cut across the plain, entered an angle of the forest which was on his way, left it again on the other side, reached the main road to Pont-d'Ain, followed it for about a mile, and stopped before a group of buildings now called the Maison-des-Gardes. One of these houses bore for a sign a bunch of holly, which meant that it was one of those wayside halting-places where travellers on foot could slake their thirst and rest for a time to recover strength for the long tramp before them. On arriving at the door Morgan stopped, and pulling a pistol from its holster he knocked with the butt-end, as he had done at the gate of the Chartreuse. The good people of the humble tavern were far from being conspirators; he was, therefore, not kept waiting as he had been at the monastery. The wooden shoes of the hostler were presently heard; the gate creaked. But the worthy man who opened it no sooner saw the horseman with his pistols than he tried instinctively to shut it.

"It is I, Patant," said the young man; "don't be frightened."

"Sure enough," said the peasant, "it is you, Monsieur Charles. I've no fear now; but you know, as Monsieur le curé used to tell us in the days when there was a good God, caution is the mother of safety."

"Yes, Patant, that's true," said the young man, dismounting and slipping a bit of money into the hostler's hand. "But don't be uneasy; the good God will soon come back, and monsieur le curé too."

"Oh! as for that, I don't know," said the other. "Seems as if there was no one left on high by the way things are going. Will they last long like this, Monsieur Charles?"

"Patant, I promise on my word of honor to do my best to get rid of them. I am not less impatient than you; so I'll ask you not to go to bed to-night, my good Patant."

"Ah! you know, monsieur, when you come I don't often go to bed. As for the horse — Goodness! you change your horses every day. The last time it was a chestnut, the time before that it was a dapple-gray, and now it's a black!"

"Yes, I'm capricious by nature. As to the horse, my dear Patant, he does not want anything. Just take the bridle off, that's all; don't unsaddle him. Here, put that pistol back in the holster and keep these two carefully till I come back;" and the young man took out those that were in his belt and gave them to the hostler.

"Well done!" said the man, laughing. "How many more barkers?"

"You know, Patant, how unsafe the roads are."

"Indeed I do," Monsieur Charles. "There's a regular brigandage going on. Why, only last week they stopped and robbed the diligence between Bourg and Geneva."

"You don't say so!" said Morgan. "Do they suspect any one?"

"Oh, it was such a trick! Just fancy, they called themselves The Company of Jesus! Of course I don't believe a

word of that. Who are The Company of Jesus, if not the twelve apostles?"

"True," said Morgan, with his eternally joyous smile. "I don't know of any others."

"Who ever heard the like?" continued Patant; "accuse the twelve apostles of robbing a diligence! Oh, I tell you, Monsieur Charles, we are living in times when nobody respects anything."

And shaking his head like a misanthrope disgusted, if not with life, at least with men, Patant departed, leading the horse toward the stable.

As for Morgan, he watched the hostler till he saw him enter the dark stable; then, turning round the hedge which bordered the garden, he went rapidly down toward a large clump of trees, the lofty tops of which were pencilled upon the sky, with the majesty of things immovable, while their shadows fell upon a charming little country-house, which bore in the neighborhood the rather pompous title of the *château des Noires-Fontaines*. As Morgan reached it, the hour sounded from the belfry of the village of *Montagnac*. The young man counted the strokes as they vibrated in the calm and silent atmosphere of the autumn night. It was eleven o'clock. Many things, as we have seen, had happened in the last two hours.

Morgan walked on a few steps, examined the outer wall, seemed to find a familiar spot, and then, inserting the toe of his boot in a cleft made at the juncture of two stones, he sprang like a man who mounts a horse, seized the coping with his left hand, and with a second spring landed astride of the wall, from which with the rapidity of lightning he let himself drop on the other side. All this was done with such agility and quickness and so noiselessly that any one passing at the time would have thought the scene a trick of his vision. Morgan stopped as before and listened, while his eyes tried to pierce the darkness made deeper by the foliage of the aspens and poplars and the heavy shadows of the little wood. All was solitary

and silent. Morgan ventured on his way. We say *ventured* because in the behavior of the young man ever since he had come in sight of the château des Noires-Fontaines, there appeared a hesitation and a timidity which were quite out of keeping with his character. It was evident that, for once at least, he was afraid, and that his fears were not for himself.

He reached the edge of the woods, still moving cautiously; then he came upon a lawn, at the end of which was the little château. There he stopped and examined the front of the building. Only one of the twelve windows on that side was lighted. This was on the second floor, at the corner of the house. A little balcony covered with vines, which were climbing about the wall, clinging to the iron railing, and falling thence in festoons, projected below the lighted window and overhung the garden. On either side of the window, close to the balcony, were trees with large leaves, which met and formed above the cornice a bower of verdure. A Venetian blind, which was raised and lowered by cords, separated the balcony from the window, — a separation which was easily removed at will. It was through the interstices of this blind that Morgan had seen the light.

The first impulse of the young man was to cross the lawn in a direct line; but again the fears of which we spoke withheld him. A linden path ran along the wall and led to the house. He turned out of his way and entered its dark and leafy covert. When he reached the end of it he crossed, as rapidly as a frightened doe, the open space which led to the foot of the house wall, and stood for a moment in the deep shadow cast by the building. Then he stepped back a few paces with his eyes fixed on the window, but not enough to leave the shadow. When he reached a distance he appeared to have calculated he clapped his hands three times.

At the call a shadow darted from the end of the apartment and clung to the window, graceful, flexible, almost transparent.

Morgan renewed the signal. The window was opened instantly, the blind was drawn up, and a beautiful young girl in a night-dress, with her fair hair rippling over her shoulders, appeared in that frame of verdure.

The young man stretched out his arms to her whose arms were stretched to him, and two names, or rather, two cries from the heart crossed in the air from one to the other: —

“Charles!”

“Amélie!”

Then the young man bounded against the wall, caught at the vineshoots, at rough points of the stones, at the edges of the cornice, and was on the balcony in a second.

What these two beautiful young beings said to each other was only a murmur of love lost in an endless kiss. Then, with a gentle exercise of strength, the young man drew the girl with one hand into the room, while with the other he loosened the cords of the blind, which fell noisily behind them. The window was then closed, the light extinguished, and the whole front of the *château des Noires-Fontaines* became dark and silent.

The darkness and silence lasted about fifteen minutes, and then the rolling of a carriage was heard on the road leading from the highway of Pont-d’Ain to the entrance of the *château*. There the sound ceased; it was evident that the carriage had stopped before the gates.

X.

ROLAND'S FAMILY.

THE carriage which had stopped before the gate was that which brought Roland back to his family, accompanied by Sir John Tanlay.

The household were so far from expecting him that, as we have already seen, all the lights of the house were out, all the windows dark, even that of Amélie. The postilion had cracked his whip in vain for the last five hundred yards; the noise was insufficient to rouse the inhabitants from their first sleep. When the carriage stopped Roland sprang out, without waiting to let down the steps, and tugged at the bell. Five minutes elapsed; Roland rang and rang again, turning to Sir John after every pull to say, "Don't be impatient, Sir John."

At last a window opened and a childish but firm voice cried out:—

"Who is ringing in that way?"

"Ah! is that you, little Édouard?" said Roland; "make haste and let us in."

The child jumped back with a joyous cry and disappeared; but almost immediately his voice was heard in the corridor crying out:—

"Mother! wake up; it is Roland! Sister! wake up; it is the big brother!"

An instant later a key grated in the lock of the door; the bolts were run back. Then a white figure appeared in the portico and flew rather than ran to the gates, which in another moment turned on their hinges and opened. The boy sprang upon Roland's neck and hung there.

“Ah! brother, brother!” he cried, kissing the young man and laughing and crying together. “Ah, big brother Roland! How pleased the mother will be; and Amélie too! Everybody is well. I’m the least well — Ah! except Michel, who has sprained his leg. Why are not you in uniform? Oh! you are ugly in citizen’s clothes. Have you just come from Egypt? Did you bring me some pistols mounted in silver, and a beautiful curved scimitar? No? Then you are not nice, and I won’t kiss you any more. Yes, yes, I will. Don’t be afraid; I love you still.”

And the boy literally smothered his brother with kisses, while he showered him with questions. The Englishman, still seated in the carriage, looked smilingly on the scene through the open door.

In the midst of this fraternal tenderness a woman’s voice was heard, — the voice of a mother.

“Where are you, Roland, my dear son?” cried Madame de Montrevel, in a voice of such violent joyous emotion that it was almost painful. “Where is he? Can it be true that he has returned, — that he is not dead? Is he really living?”

The boy, hearing her voice, slipped like an eel from his brother’s arms, dropped erect on the grass, and then, as if moved by a spring, bounded toward his mother.

“This way, mother; this way!” he cried, dragging his mother, half-dressed as she was, toward Roland. When Roland saw her he could contain himself no longer, but fell sobbing on her breast, without thinking of Sir John, who felt his Anglican phlegm disperse as he silently wiped away the tears that flowed down his cheeks and moistened his smile. The child, the mother, and Roland made an adorable group of tenderness and emotion.

Presently little Édouard, like a leaf that the wind whirls away, flew from the group, crying out: —

“Sister Amélie! Where is sister Amélie?”

And almost immediately the child was heard kicking

and striking with his fists against a door. There was silence for a few moments. Then the boy shouted from the stairs:—

“Help! help! mother, brother Roland, help! Sister Amélie is ill!”

Madame de Montrevel and her son sprang into the house. Sir John, consummate tourist that he was, always carried a lancet and a bottle of smelling-salts. He now jumped out of the carriage, and, obeying his first impulse, went up on the portico. There he stopped, reflecting that he had not been introduced, — an all-important formula for an Englishman. But it now appeared that the fainting lady whom he had gone to seek was on her way toward him.

The noise her little brother had made brought Amélie to the landing; but the excitement of hearing of Roland's return was, perhaps, too much for her, for after descending a few stairs in an almost automatic manner, her strength gave way, and like a flower that bends, a branch that droops, a scarf that floats, she fell with a sigh, or rather she slid down upon the stairway. It was then that the boy cried out for help.

But at his cry she recovered, if not her strength, at least her will. She raised herself up, and stammering, “Hush, Édouard! hush, for heaven's sake! I am well!” she clung with one hand to the baluster, and leaning the other on the boy's shoulder, she continued to descend the stairs. At the lowest step she met her mother and elder brother. Then with a violent, almost desperate movement she flung both arms round Roland's neck, crying out:—

“Brother! oh, my brother!”

Roland, feeling her weight fall heavily on his shoulder, exclaimed hastily, “Air! air! Give her air; she is fainting!” and carried her out upon the portico. It was this new group, so different from the last, which now met the eyes of Sir John Tanlay.

As soon as she felt the air Amélie revived and lifted her head. Just then the moon in all its splendor shook off a cloud which had veiled it and lighted the girl's pale face. Sir John gave a cry of admiration. We must say here that Amélie, seen thus, was marvellously beautiful. Wearing a long cambric night-dress, which defined a body moulded on the lines of the antique Polyhymnia, her pale head gently inclined upon her brother's breast, the waves of her golden hair floating upon her snowy shoulders, her arm just thrown about her mother's neck, its hand hanging upon the crimson shawl in which Madame de Montrevel had wrapped herself, — a hand of rosy alabaster, — such was Roland's sister as she now appeared to the eyes of Sir John Tanlay.

At the cry of admiration uttered by the Englishman, Roland remembered that he was there, and Madame de Montrevel perceived his presence. As for the child, amazed to see this stranger in his mother's home, he ran rapidly down the steps, stopping on the third from the bottom, — not that he feared to go farther, but because he wished to be on the level of the person he proceeded to question.

"Who are you, monsieur?" he demanded; "and what are you doing here?"

"My boy," said Sir John, "I am a friend of your brother, and I have the silver-mounted pistols and the Damascus blade you asked for."

"Where are they?" said the child.

"In England," replied Sir John; "and it will take some time to get them. But here's your big brother, who will answer for me that I keep my word."

"Yes, Édouard, yes," said Roland; "if Sir John promises anything he is certain to do it." Then, turning to his mother and sister, he added, "Excuse me, dear mother; excuse me, Amélie, — or rather excuse yourselves as best you can to my friend, Sir John Tanlay; you have made me abominably ungrateful." He grasped Sir John's hand.

"Mother," he said, "this gentleman took occasion the first time that he saw me to do me an eminent service; I know that you never forget such things. I hope, therefore, that you will always remember that Sir John is one of our best friends; and he will give you a proof of it by consenting to bore himself here with us for two or three weeks."

"Madame," said Sir John, "permit me, on the contrary, to say that my desire would be to spend, not two or three weeks, but a whole lifetime here, were that possible."

Madame de Montrevel came down the steps of the portico and offered her hand to the Englishman, which he kissed with a gallantry that was altogether French.

"This house is yours, Sir John," she said. "The day when you enter it is a happy day for us; the day when you leave it a regretful one."

Sir John turned toward Amélie, who, confused by the disorder of her dress before this stranger, was hastily gathering the folds of her wrapper about her throat.

"I speak in my own name and that of my daughter, who is too much overcome by the return of her brother to welcome you herself, as she will do presently," said Madame de Montrevel, coming to Amélie's relief.

"My sister," said Roland, "will permit my friend Sir John to kiss her hand; and he will accept, I am sure, that form of welcome."

Amélie murmured a few words, slowly raised her arm, and held out her hand to Sir John with a smile that was almost painful. The Englishman took it, but feeling how icy and how trembling it was, he did not carry it to his lips, but said, speaking hastily to Roland:—

"Your sister is seriously ill; let us think only of her health. I am something of a doctor, and if she will deign to grant me the favor of feeling her pulse, I shall be more than grateful."

But Amélie, as though she feared that the cause of her

illness might be surmised, withdrew her hand hastily, exclaiming: —

“No, no! Sir John is quite mistaken; joy never causes illness. The joy of seeing my brother once more made me giddy for a moment; but it has all passed off now.” Then turning to Madame de Montrevel she added with almost feverish haste, “My dear mother, are we not forgetting that these gentlemen have just made a long journey? They have probably eaten nothing since Lyon, and if Roland has his usual good appetite, he will approve of my leaving you and him to do the honors of the house, while I attend to the less poetic affairs of the housekeeping.”

Leaving her mother, as she said, to do the honors, Amélie withdrew to waken the cook and the man-servant, leaving on the mind of Sir John the sort of fairy-like impression which the tourist on the Rhine brings away with him of the Lorelei standing on her rock, a lyre in her hand, the liquid gold of her hair floating in the breeze of evening.

During this time Morgan had again remounted his horse, returning at full gallop to the Chartreuse. He stopped before the portal, and taking his note-book from his pocket he wrote a few lines on a leaf of it, which he tore out, rolled up, and slipped through the keyhole, without taking time to dismount. Then, touching his horse with both spurs and bending almost to the mane of the noble animal, he disappeared in the forest with the mystery and rapidity of Faust on his way to the witches' sabbath. The three lines he had written were as follows: —

“Louis de Montrevel, aide-de-camp to General Bonaparte, arrived to-night at the château des Noires-Fontaines.

“Be careful, Companions of Jehu.”

But although he thus warned his friends to be cautious about Louis de Montrevel, Morgan had taken care to draw a cross above the young aide-de-camp's name, which meant

that whatever happened they were to regard the person of that young man as sacred.

The Companions of Jehu had the right to protect a friend in that way without being obliged to explain their reasons for so doing. Morgan used that privilege, and protected the brother of his love.

XI.

THE CHÂTEAU DES NOIRES-FONTAINES.

THE château des Noires-Fontaines, to which we have just conducted two of the principal personages of this history, stood in one of the most charming situations of the valley where the town of Bourg was built. The park, of five or six acres covered with venerable trees, was closed on three sides by walls of freestone, one of which opened to the front through a handsome gate of hammered iron, in the style and manner Louis XV.; and on the fourth it was bounded by the little river named the Reyssouse, — a pretty stream which takes its rise at Journaud among the Jura foot-hills, and flowing thence with gentle current from south to north, falls into the Saône at the bridge of Fleurville opposite Pont-de-Vaux, the home of Joubert, who, a month before the time of which we are writing, had been killed at Novi.

Beyond the Reyssouse and along its banks lay, to right and left of the château des Noires-Fontaines, the villages of Montagnat and Saint-Just, commanded farther on by that of Ceyzeriat. Behind this latter hamlet were the graceful silhouettes of the Jura hills, above the crests of which could be seen the blue summits of the mountains of Bugey, which seemed to be standing on tiptoe to see, over their younger sisters' shoulders, what was passing in the valley of the Ain. It was in full view of this enchanting scene that Sir John waked up on the following morning. For the first time in his life, perhaps, the sedate and taciturn Englishman smiled at nature. He fancied himself in one of those beautiful vales of Thessaly celebrated by

Virgil, or beside the sweet shores of Lignon sung by d'Urfé, whose birthplace, no matter what the biographers may say, was falling into ruins not three miles away from the château des Noires-Fontaines.

Sir John was drawn from his contemplations by three taps lightly made upon his door. It was Roland, who came to ask how his guest had passed the night. He found him radiant as the sun, which was dancing on the already yellowing foliage of the chestnuts and the lindens.

"Oh, oh! Sir John," cried Roland, "permit me to congratulate you. I expected to find you as gloomy as those poor Chartreux with their white robes, who used to terrify me in my childhood, — though, indeed, I was never very easy to frighten. Instead of that I find you on this dreary October day as smiling as a May morning."

"My dear Roland," said Sir John, "I am an orphan; I lost my mother the day I was born, and my father when I was twelve years old. At an age when children are sent to school I was master of a fortune of a million a year; but I was alone in the world, with no one that I loved, no one to love me. The tender joys of family life are therefore unknown to me. I went to Cambridge, but there my taciturn, perhaps haughty, nature isolated me among my fellows. At eighteen I began to travel. You who scour the world under the shadow of your flag — that is, the shadow of your country — can have no idea what a miserable thing it is to roam through cities, provinces, and nations, merely to visit a church here, a castle there; to get up at four in the morning at the pitiless command of a guide to see the sunrise from the Righi, or the first touch of its glow upon *Ætna*; to pass, like a phantom already dead, through that world of living ghosts whom we call men; to know not where to rest; to have no land, to take no root, to find no arm on which to lean, no heart in which to pour one's own! Well, last night, dear Roland, suddenly, in an instant, in a second, the void in my life was filled. I lived in you; the joys I sought were yours. That family

I never had was smiling round you. As I looked at your mother, I said to myself, 'My mother was like that; I am certain of it.' Looking at your sister I said, 'If I had had a sister could I have wished her otherwise?' And when I kissed your brother the thought came over me that I too might have had a child like that, to leave behind me when I leave the world; whereas, with the nature that I know I have, I shall die as I have lived, — sad, surly to others, a burden to myself. Ah! you are happy, Roland; you have a family, you have fame, you have youth, you have that which spoils nothing, even in a man, — you have beauty. No joy is lacking to you; no happiness has failed you. I repeat it, Roland, you are a happy man, most happy."

Roland laughed in the nervous, excitable manner that was usual with him.

"Ha, ha!" he cried; "so this is the English tourist, the superficial traveller, who pauses nowhere, appreciates nothing, gauges nothing, judges everything by its effect on him and his sensations, and says, without even opening the door of the abodes in which the fools we call men live, 'Behind these walls is happiness!' Well, my dear fellow, you see this charming river, don't you, — these flowery meads, those pretty villages? It is a picture of peace, is it not, — of innocence, of fraternity? It is a cycle of Saturn, the age of gold, Eden, paradise! Now let me tell you the truth. It is peopled with beings who have flown at one another's throats. The jungles of the Hoogly, the sedges of Bengal are the home of tigers and of panthers not one whit more ferocious or more cruel than the human beings who live in those smiling villages, on those grassy meads, and along those charming shores. After lauding to heaven in funeral feasts the good, the great, the immortal Marat, — whose body, thank God! they ended by throwing into a sewer, like the carrion that he was and always had been, — after performing these funeral rites, to which each man brought his tears in a vase, behold our good people, our fruit-growers, our poultry-fatteners, suddenly turned about

and declared the Republicans murderers. So then they murdered them in turn, by the tumbrelful, to correct them of that vile defect common to savage and to civilized men, — that of killing their kind. Do you doubt what I say? My dear fellow, on the road over there to Lons-le-Saulnier, they will show you the place, if you inquire, where, not six months ago, they organized a butchery which would turn the stomachs of our most ferocious troopers on a battle-field. Imagine a tumbrel filled with prisoners on their way to Lons-le-Saulnier; it was a cart with railed sides, — one of those huge carts in which they carry calves to market. In that cart were thirty men whose only crime was excitement, and threatening language. They were bound and gagged, heads hanging, and jostled by the bumping of the cart, breasts heaving with thirst, despair, and terror, — miserable beings, who did not even have, as in the times of Nero and Commodus, the fight in the arena, the hand-to-hand struggle with death, — miserable creatures, powerless, motionless, massacred in their fetters, battered not in life only, but in death; their bodies, when the breath had left them, still resounding beneath the bludgeons which broke the bones and jellied the flesh; while women looked on tranquilly and joyously, lifting high their children to clap their little hands, and old men, who ought to have been thinking of a Christian death, helped by their goading cries to make the death of these most wretched men more wretched still. And in the midst of all, a man of seventy, a little man, fresh, dainty, powdered, flipping his lace shirt-frill if an atom of dust settled there, pinching his Spanish tobacco from a golden snuff-box with a diamond monogram, eating his perfumed sugar-plums from a Sèvres bonbonnière given him by Madame du Barry and adorned by the portrait of the giver, this septuagenarian — conceive to yourself the picture, Sir John — dancing with his dainty pumps upon these bodies, upon that mattress of human flesh, wearying his arm, enfeebled by age, in striking with his gold-headed

cane those of the victims who seemed to him not dead enough, not mashed and pounded enough in that cursed mortar. Faugh! I have seen Montebello, I have seen Arcola, I have seen Rivoli, I have seen the Pyramids; I thought never to see anything more terrible. Well, the account my mother gave me last night, after you went to your room, of what has happened here made my hair stand on end. God! that's enough to explain the spasms of my poor sister."

Sir John looked at Roland and listened with that amazed curiosity which the misanthropic outbursts of his new friend always roused in him. Roland seemed to lurk in the corners of a conversation in order to fall upon the human species whenever he found a chance. He saw the impression he had just made on the Englishman's mind, and he instantly changed his tone, substituting a bitter sort of raillery for his philanthropic wrath.

"It is true," he said, "that with the exception of that dainty aristocrat who finished what the butchers had begun, and dyed in blood the heels of his pumps, the men who performed these massacres were men of low estate, — burghers and 'clowns,' as our forefathers called them; in these days we are more elegant. You saw yourself what happened in Avignon. If you had been told that, you never would have believed it, would you? Those gentlemen who rob coaches pique themselves on their honor. They have two faces, not counting their mask. Sometimes they are Cartouche and Mandrin; at other times Amadis and Galahad. They tell fabulous histories of these highway heroes. My mother told me yesterday of one named Laurent, — you understand, my dear fellow, that their names are all fictitious, to hide their real names as a mask hides the face. This man Laurent had all the qualities of a hero of romance, all the accomplishments, as you English say; for under pretext that you were once Normans you allow us sometimes to enrich our language from yours with a picturesque expression, or some word

which has long and vainly, poor beggar! asked admittance of our own scholars. Well, this Laurent was ideally handsome. He was one of seventy-two of The Company of Jehu who have lately been tried at Yssengeaux. Seventy were acquitted, but he and one other were condemned to death. The released men were sent away at once. Laurent and his companion were put in prison to await the guillotine. Pooh! master Laurent had too pretty a head to fall in the basket. The judges who had judged him, the crowd who waited to see him executed had forgotten what Montaigne calls the corporeal recommendation of beauty. There was a woman belonging to the jailer of Yssengeaux, whether his daughter, sister, or niece, history — for it is history I am telling you, not romance — well, history does not say. At any rate there was a woman, whoever she was, and she fell in love with the handsome prisoner, — so much in love that two hours before the execution, and just as Laurent, expecting the executioner, was asleep or pretending to sleep, his guardian angel entered to him. I can't say how they managed it, for I don't know. The lovers never told, and good reason why; but the end was (now remember, Sir John, this is truth, not fiction), the end was that Laurent was free, but unable to save his friend in the adjoining dungeon. Now Gensonné, you remember, in like circumstances, refused to escape, and preferred to die with the other Girondins; but Gensonné did not have the head of Antinous on the body of Apollo. The handsomer the head the more, you know, you hold on to it. Laurent accepted the freedom that was given to him and escaped; a horse awaited him in the next village. The girl, who might have retarded or embarrassed his escape, was to join him at dawn the next day. Dawn came, but not the angel. It seems our hero thought more of his mistress than he did of his fellow Jehu; he would not go without her. It was six o'clock, — the very hour for his execution. He grew impatient. Three times he turned his horse's head toward the town, and each time

he drew nearer and nearer. A thought occurred to him. Could his mistress have been taken? Would she die for him? He was then in the suburbs. Setting spurs to his horse, he crossed the town, with his face uncovered in the midst of the crowd, who called him by name, amazed to see him free and on horseback, when they were waiting to see him bound in a tumbrel on his way to execution. At that moment he caught sight of his angel pushing her way through the crowd, not to see him executed but to join him. He spurred his horse, bounded toward her, knocking over with the breast of his Bayard two or three clowns who were in his way, caught her, swung her to the pommel of his saddle with a cry of joy, and waving his hat disappeared, like M. de Condé at the battle of Lens; and all the people applauded, and the women thought the action fine, and fell in love with the hero on the spot."

Roland paused, and observing that Sir John kept silence, he questioned him by a look.

"Go on," said the Englishman; "I am listening. And as I am sure you are telling me all that in order to come to something else, I await your point."

"Ha! ha!" said Roland, laughing, "you are right, my dear fellow; and you know me as if we had been school-mates. Well, what idea do you suppose has been rolling in my brain all night? It is that of getting a nearer look at these gentlemen of The Company of Jehu."

"Yes, I see; as you did not get killed by M. de Barjols, you want to try your chance of being killed by M. Morgan."

"Or any other of them," said the young officer, tranquilly; "for I have nothing against M. Morgan; quite the contrary, though my first impulse when he came into the room and made his little speech was to fly at his throat and choke him with one hand, and tear off his mask with the other."

"Now that I know you, my dear Roland, I wonder why you did not put so fine a project into execution."

"It was not my fault, I swear to you. I was just springing up when my companion held me back."

"So there are persons who can restrain you?"

"Not many; but one man can."

"Do you regret it?"

"No, indeed, I do not. The brave fellow did the business with such coolness that I admired him. I love brave men instinctively. If I had not killed M. de Barjols I should have liked to make a friend of him. It is true I could n't tell how brave he was till I had killed him — But let us talk of something else; that duel is one of my painful thoughts. Besides, all this is n't what I came for. I did not disturb you to talk about The Company of Jehu, or the adventures of M. Laurent; I came to ask how you would like to spend your time. I'll cut myself in quarters to amuse you, my dear guest, though I have two disadvantages on my side, — this region, which is not amusing; and your nationality, which is not amusable."

"I have told you already, Roland," said Sir John, taking the young man's hand, "that I regard the château des Noires-Fontaines as a paradise."

"I agree to that; but still, in the fear that you may soon find paradise monotonous, I wish to do my best to amuse you. Do you like archæology, — you who have Westminster Abbey and Canterbury? We have a marvel here, the church at Brou, — a wonder of sculptured lace by Colomban. There is a legend about it which I will tell you some evening when you can't go to sleep. You will see there the tombs of Marguerite de Bourbon and Philippe le Beau, also that of Marguerite of Austria; and I will puzzle you with the problem of its motto: 'Fortune, infortune, fort'une,' which I claim to have solved by a Latinized version: *Fortuna, infortuna, forti una*. But do you like fishing, my dear friend? There's the Reyssouse at your feet, and close at hand a collection of lines and flies belonging to Édouard, and a collection of nets belonging to Michel. If you prefer hunting, the forest of Seillon is

near by. Hunting, properly so called, of course you must renounce; I speak of shooting. In the days of my old bogies, the Chartreux monks, the forest teemed with wild-boars, hares, and foxes. Nobody hunts there now, for the reason that the forest belongs to the government; and the government, at this particular time, is nobody. However, in my capacity as aide-de-camp to General Bonaparte, I'll make the attempt. We will see who dares meddle with me if, after chasing the Austrians on the Adige, and the Mameluks on the Nile, I choose to hunt boars and deer and hares and foxes on the Reysseuse. One day of archæology, one day's fishing, and one of hunting, — that will help us along; but there will still be fifteen to think of. Are you hungry?"

"Why do you ask?"

"Because I hear Édouard on the staircase, running up to tell us that breakfast is ready."

As Roland spoke the door opened and the boy said, "Brother Roland, mother and sister Amélie are waiting breakfast for Sir John and you."

Then catching the Englishman's right hand, he looked carefully at the first joint of the thumb and forefinger.

"What are you looking at, my little friend?" said Sir John.

"I was looking to see if you had any ink on your finger."

"And if I had ink on my fingers what would it mean?"

"That you have written to England, and sent for my pistols and sabre."

"No, I have not yet written," said Sir John; "but I shall write to-day."

"Do you hear, big brother Roland? I'm to have my pistols and my sabre!"

And the boy, full of delight, presented his firm and rosy cheek to Sir John, who kissed it with the tenderness of a father. Then they went to the dining-room, where Madame de Montrevel and Amélie were awaiting them.

XII.

PROVINCIAL PLEASURES.

THE same day Roland put part of his plans for his guest's amusement into execution. He took Sir John to see the church at Brou.

Those who have seen the charming little chapel of Brou know that it is one of the hundred marvels of the Renaissance; those who have not seen it must often have heard that said. Roland, who expected to do the honors of this historic gem to his English friend, and who had not seen it for seven or eight years, was greatly disappointed when, on arriving in front of the building he found the niches of the saints empty and the carved figures of the portal decapitated. He asked for the sexton; people laughed at him. Sexton! there was no sexton. He then asked to whom he should go to get the keys. They sent him to the captain of the gendarmerie. The captain was not far off, for the cloister of the church had been turned into a barrack.

Roland went up into the captain's room and made himself known as aide-de-camp to General Bonaparte. The officer, with the passive obedience of a subaltern, gave Roland the keys and followed behind him. Sir John, meantime, was waiting before the porch, admiring, in spite of the mutilation to which they had been subjected, the exquisite details of the frontal.

Roland opened the door and stepped back in amazement. The church was literally stuffed with hay.

"What is all this?" he said to the captain of gendarmes.

"A precaution taken by the municipality."

“A precaution? — what for?”

“To save the church. They were going to pull it down; but the mayor issued a decree declaring that in expiation of the false worship for which it had served it should now be used to store hay.”

Roland burst out laughing, and turning to Sir John, he remarked: —

“The church was well worth seeing, my dear friend; but I think that what the captain tells us is more interesting still. You can find in many places — Strasbourg, or Cologne, or Milan — churches or cathedrals which equal the church at Brou, but where will you find an administration idiotic enough to think of destroying such a relic, or a mayor clever enough to save it by making it a barn? A thousand thanks, captain; here are your keys.”

“Did I not tell you at Avignon the first time I had the pleasure of seeing you,” said Sir John, “that the French were the most amusing people upon earth?”

“This time you are too polite,” said Roland; “you ought to have said idiotic instead of amusing. Listen: I can comprehend the political cataclysms which have convulsed our society for a thousand years; I comprehend the communes, the *pastoreaux*, the Jacquerie, the *maillotins*, the League, the Fronde, the *dragonnades*, the Revolution; I can understand the 14th of July, the 5th and 6th of October, the 20th of June, the 10th of August, the 2d and 3d of September, the 21st of January, the 31st of May, the 30th of October, and the 9th Thermidor; I comprehend the tidal wave of Revolution which rushes onward and cannot be arrested, and its ebb, which carries with it the ruins of the institutions itself has wrecked. I can comprehend all that. War, too, I comprehend, — lance against lance, sword against sword, man against man, people against people; I can understand the deadly rage of victors, the bloody reactions of the vanquished, the political volcanoes which rumble in the bowels of the globe, and shake the earth and topple over thrones, upset monarchies,

and roll heads and crowns on scaffolds, — but what I cannot comprehend is the destruction of inanimate things, the mutilation of granite, the casting down of monumental works which belong neither to those who destroy them nor to the age in which they are destroyed, — the pillage of that gigantic library where the antiquary may read, as in a book, the archæological history of a country. Oh, the vandals! the barbarians! — worse than that, the idiots! who revenge the Borgia crimes and the debauches of Louis XV. on stone! How well those Pharaohs and Cheops knew men as the most perverse, destructive, and evil of animals, when they built their pyramids, not with tracery or carvings, not with pinnacles or spires, but with solid blocks of granite fifty feet long. How they must have chuckled in the depths of those sepulchres, against which time has dulled its scythe and the pachas worn their finger-nails in vain. Let us build pyramids, Sir John. They are neither difficult as architecture, nor beautiful as art; but they are solid, and that enables a general to say after a lapse of four thousand years, ‘Soldiers, from the apex of these monuments forty centuries are looking at you!’ Upon my honor, I long at this moment for a windmill that I might run a tilt against it.”

And Roland, bursting into his accustomed laugh, tried to drag off Sir John in the direction of the château. But Sir John resisted.

“Is there nothing to see here except the church?” he asked.

“Formerly,” said Roland, “that is, before they made it a hay-loft, I should have asked you to go down into the vaults of the Dukes of Savoie. We might have hunted together for a subterranean passage nearly three miles long, which is said to exist there, and which communicates, so they say, with the grotto of Ceyzeriat. It would have been like a scene of your Anne Radcliffe in the ‘Mysteries of Udolpho;’ but you see it is impossible. Come.”

“Where are you taking me now?”

“Faith, I don’t know. Ten years ago I should have taken you to see the farms where they fattened pullets. The pullets of Bresse, you must know, have a European reputation. Bourg was an annex to the great coop Strasbourg. But during the Terror the fatteners of poultry had to shut up shop; you were taken for an aristocrat if you ate a chicken, and you know the fraternal chorus, ‘Ah! ça ira, ça ira, les aristocrates à la lanterne!’ After the fall of Robespierre the pullets were fattened again; but since the 18th Fructidor France has been commanded to grow thin, fowls and all. However, in default of fat fowls, I can show you one thing, — the place where they executed those who ate them.”

“Look here,” said Sir John, “are you or are you not a Republican?”

“I, not a Republican! Come, come! I count myself an excellent Republican. I am capable of burning my fist off like Mucius Scævola, or jumping into the gulf like Curtius to save the Republic; but I have unluckily a sense of the ridiculous. The absurdity of things catches me on the side, and tickles me and makes me laugh. I accept very readily the constitution of 1791; but when poor Hérault de Séchelles wrote to the director of the National Library to send him a copy of the laws of Minos, so that he might make a constitution on the model of the laws of the Island of Crete, I thought it was going rather far, and that we ought to content ourselves with those of Lycurgus. I think January, February, and March, mythological as they are, every bit as good as Nivôse, Pluviôse, and Ventôse. I can’t see why when people were called Antoine or Chrysostome in 1789, they should be called Brutus and Cassius in 1793. Here! look here, Sir John; here’s a good honest street, which used to be called the rue des Halles. There was nothing indecent or aristocratic in that, was there? Well, now it is called — Wait a minute” (Roland looked up at a wall); “it is called the rue de la Révolution. Here’s another, that used to be the

rue Notre Dame; it is now the rue du Temple. Why rue du Temple? Probably to perpetuate the memory of the place where that infamous Simon tried to teach cobbling to the heir of sixty-three kings, — perhaps I am wrong by one or two; but if so, excuse it. Now here's another street. It used to be the rue Crève-cœur, a very honorable name in Bresse and Burgundy and Flanders; it is now the rue de la Fédération. Federation is a fine thing, but Crève-cœur was a fine name. And then, do you see, it leads, to-day, straight to the place de la Guillotine; that is all wrong, in my opinion. I don't want any streets to lead to such places. This one, you see, had an advantage; it is only about three hundred feet from the prison, — a fact which economized and still economizes the horse and cart of Monsieur de Bourg — By the bye, remark, if you please, that the executioner remains aristocratic and keeps the *de*. The square is admirably arranged for spectators, and my ancestor Montrevel, whose name it bears, possibly foreseeing its destiny, solved the great problem, still unsolved in theatres, of every spectator being able to see everywhere. If my head is ever cut off, — which may very well happen in these days, — I shall have but one regret, that of being less well placed and seeing less than others. Now, let us go up these steps; here we are in the place des Lices. Our revolutionists have left it its name, because, in all probability, they don't know what it means. I don't know much better than they; but I think I remember that a certain Sieur d'Estavayer challenged some Flemish count, and the fight took place in this square. And now, my dear Sir John, here is the prison, which ought to give you some idea of human vicissitudes. Gil Blas did n't change his condition as often as this building has changed purposes. Before Cæsar came it was a temple of the Gauls; Cæsar made it a Roman fortress; an unknown architect transformed it into a military work of the Middle Ages; the lords of Baye, following Cæsar's example, remade it into a fortress. The princes of Savoie used it as a resi-

dence; here lived the great-aunt of Charles V., when she came to visit her church at Brou, which she never had the satisfaction of seeing finished. Finally, after the treaty of Lyon, when Bresse returned to France, they made it into a prison with the law-courts attached. Wait a moment for me here, if you don't like the grating of hinges and the squeak of bolts. I have a visit to pay to a certain cell."

"The grating of hinges and the squeak of bolts is not a very enlivening noise, but no matter, — as you have evidently undertaken my education show me your cell."

"Well, come in quickly, then; I see a crowd of persons who mean to speak to me."

In fact, little by little, a sort of rumor seemed to spread through the town. Persons came out of their houses, or formed in groups on the streets; and they all looked at Roland with curiosity. He rang the bell of the iron gate, situated then where it is now, but at that time opening into the prison yard. A jailer came to unlock it.

"Ah, ah! so you are still here, père Courtois," said the young man. Then turning to Sir John, he added, "Is n't that a good name for a jailer?"

The jailer looked at Roland in amazement.

"How comes it," he said, through the railings, "that you know my name, and I don't know yours?"

"Bless me! I not only know your name, but I know your opinions. You are an old royalist, père Courtois."

"Monsieur," said the jailer, much frightened, "don't make bad jokes, if you please; and say at once what you want."

"Well, my dear old Courtois, I want to see the cell where they put my mother and sister, Madame and Made-moiselle de Montrevel."

"Ah!" cried the old man; "so it's you, Monsieur Louis, is it? You might well say I knew you. But you've grown a fine, handsome fellow!"

"Do you think so, père Courtois? Well, the same to

you; for your daughter Charlotte is, I declare, a fine, handsome girl. Charlotte is my sister's maid, Sir John."

"And she is very happy there," said old Courtois, "much better off than here. But they tell me you are aide-de-camp to General Bonaparte."

"Alas! Courtois, I have that honor. You would rather I were aide-de-camp to M. le Comte d'Artois or M. le Duc d'Angoulême, would n't you?"

"Please hold your tongue, Monsieur Louis." Then putting his mouth to the young man's ear, he added, "Tell me, is it really true?"

"What?"

"That General Bonaparte passed through Lyon yesterday?"

"There must be some truth in the news, for this is the second time I have heard it. Ah! I understand now why all the good people in the streets looked at me with such curiosity and seemed to want to question me. They are like you, père Courtois; they want to know how the return of General Bonaparte will affect them."

"Do you know what else is said, Monsieur Louis?"

"Is there anything else, père Courtois?"

"I should think so, indeed; but they only whisper it."

"What is it?"

"They say he is going to demand from the Directory the throne of his Majesty Louis XVIII. and the king's return to it; and that if the citizen Gohier as president does n't choose to give it up, General Bonaparte will take it by main force."

"Oh, pooh!" said the young officer, with an incredulous look that was half ironical.

But old Courtois insisted on his news with affirmative nods.

"Well, you may be right," said the young man; "but this is the first I have heard of it. Come, now you know me, open the gate."

"Of course I will! What the devil am I about?"

And the jailer opened the gate with much heartiness. The young man entered, and Sir John followed him. Courtois locked the gate carefully; then Roland followed him, and Sir John followed Roland. The Englishman was beginning to get accustomed to the excitable character of the young man. The spleen, to which he attributed the youth's caprices, is misanthropy without the sulkiness of Timon or the wit of Alceste.

The jailer crossed the prison yard, which is separated from the law-courts by a wall fifteen feet high, with an opening in the middle to admit prisoners, without taking them round by the street; this was closed by a massive oaken door. The jailer, we say, crossed the whole yard, and went up some steps in the left angle, which led to the interior of the prison.

If we insist on these details, it is because we shall return to the same spot hereafter, and we wish it to be not unfamiliar to our readers when that time comes.

The steps led first into the antechamber of the prison, — that is to say, the porter's hall of the lower courtroom. From this hall ten steps led down into an inner courtyard separated from a third courtyard, which was that of the prisoners, by a wall like the one first mentioned; only, this one had three doors instead of one. At the farther end of this courtyard a passage led to the jailer's own room, which opened into a second passage, on which were the cells, which were called, picturesquely, cages. The jailer stopped at the first of these cages.

"It was here," he said, striking the door, "that I locked up Madame, your mother, and Mademoiselle your sister, so that if the dear ladies wanted anything they could knock for me or Charlotte."

"Is there any one in there now?"

"No one."

"Then please open the door and let us go in. This is my friend, Sir John Tanlay, a philanthropic Englishman, who is travelling about to see if the French prisons are any better than the English ones. Go in, Sir John."

Père Courtois having opened the door, Roland pushed his friend into a cage measuring exactly ten feet in every direction.

"Oh, oh!" cried Sir John; "this is lugubrious!"

"Do you think so? Well, this is where my mother, the noblest woman in the world, and my sister spent six weeks, with the prospect of leaving it only to make the little trip out there to the guillotine. That was five years ago, and my sister was scarcely twelve years old."

"What crime had they committed?"

"Oh, a monstrous crime! At the anniversary festival which the town of Bourg thought proper to give in commemoration of the death of Marat, my mother refused to let my sister be one of the virgins who bore the tears of France in vases. Poor woman! she thought she had done enough for the nation in giving it the blood of her son and husband, which was then flowing in Italy and Germany. She was mistaken. The nation claimed, it appeared, the tears of her daughter. She thought it too much, especially when those tears were to flow for the editor of the 'Ami du peuple.' It resulted that on the very evening of the fête my mother was declared accused. Fortunately, Bourg had not attained to the rapidity of Paris. A friend we had in the police-court made the matter drag along until, one fine day, the fall and death of Robespierre were made known. That interrupted a good many things, among others the guillotines. Our friend in the police-court made the authorities understand that a wind of clemency was blowing from Paris; they waited fifteen days, and on the sixteenth they came and told my mother and sister that they were free. So you understand, my dear fellow (and this involves the highest philosophical reflection), that if Mademoiselle Teresa Cabarrus had not come from Spain, if she had not married Monsieur Fontenay, parliamentary counsellor, if she had not been arrested and brought before the pro-consul Tallien, son of the butler of the Marquis de Bercy, ex-notary's clerk, ex-foreman of a

printing-office, ex-express-porter, ex-secretary to the Commune of Paris, if the said Teresa had not found favor in the sight of the pro-consul and caused him to fall in love with her, if she had not been imprisoned, if she had not found a way to send the pro-consul a dagger and these words, 'If the tyrant does not die to-day, I die to-morrow,' if Saint-Just had not been arrested in the middle of his speech, if Robespierre had not on that day had a frog in his throat, if Garnier (de l'Aube) had not said to him, 'It is the blood of Danton that is choking you,' if Louchet had not thereupon shouted for his arrest, and if he had not been arrested, released by the Commune, arrested again, had his jaw broken by a pistol-shot, and been executed the next day, — my mother would, in all probability, have had her head cut off because she would n't let her daughter weep for Marat into one of the dozen lachrymal vases which Bourg was desirous of filling with its tears. Good-bye, Courtois. You are a worthy fellow; you gave my mother and sister a little water to put with their wine, a little meat to put with their bread, a little hope to put in their hearts; you lent them your daughter to sweep their cell. All that deserves a fortune. Unhappily, I am not rich; but there are fifty louis I happen to have with me. Come, Sir John, let us go."

And the young man carried off his companion before the jailer recovered from his surprise and found time either to thank the giver or return the gift, which, it must be said would have been a remarkable proof of disinterestedness in a jailer, especially one whose opinions were opposed to those of the government he served.

Leaving the prison, Roland and Sir John found the place des Lices crowded with people who had heard of Bonaparte's return to France and were crying out "Vive Bonaparte!" — some because they really admired the victor of Arcola, Rivoli, and the Pyramids; others because they had been told, like père Courtois, that the victor was to claim the throne and give it to his Majesty Louis XVIII.

Roland and Sir John, having now visited all that the town of Bourg offered of interest, returned to the château des Noires-Fontaines. Madame de Montrevel and Amélie had gone out. Roland installed Sir John in an easy-chair and asked him to wait for him. At the end of five minutes he returned with a sort of pamphlet of grayish paper, very badly printed, in his hand.

"My dear Sir John," he said, "you looked a little sceptical about that festival in honor of Marat which I mentioned just now, which nearly cost the lives of my mother and sister, so I bring you the programme. Read it, and while you are doing so I will go and see what they have done with my dogs; for I presume you would rather go a-hunting than a-fishing, for your next diversion."

He went off, leaving in Sir John's hand a copy of the decree of the municipality of the town of Bourg, instituting the funeral festival in honor of Marat, on the anniversary of his death.

XIII.

THE WILD-BOAR.

SIR JOHN was just finishing that interesting bit of history when Madame de Montrevel and her daughter returned. Amélie, who did not know how much had been said about her between the Englishman and her brother, was surprised by the manner in which that gentleman fixed his eyes upon her.

She seemed to him more lovely than ever. He could well understand the mother who, at the risk of life, was not willing that that exquisite creature should profane her youth and beauty by serving in a show of which Marat was the deity. He remembered the cold, damp dungeon he had lately seen, and he shuddered as he thought that the delicate white ermine before his eyes had been locked into that dismal place, without sun or air, for six weeks. He looked at the throat, too long perhaps, but swan-like, full of suppleness and grace in its very exaggeration, and he remembered the sad words of that poor Princesse de Lamballe as she felt her slender neck and said, "It will not give much trouble to the executioner."

The thoughts that thus succeeded each other in Sir John's mind gave an expression to his countenance that was not habitual to it. Madame de Montrevel noticed this and asked what troubled him. He then related to her his visit to the prison and Roland's pious pilgrimage to the cell where his mother and sister had been imprisoned. Just as he ended his account a view-halloo sounded without, and Roland returned, his hunting-horn at his lips.

"My dear friend," he cried, "thanks to my mother, we shall have a splendid hunt to-morrow."

"Thanks to me?" said Madame de Montrevel.

"How so?" inquired Sir John.

"I left you to go and see about my dogs. I had two, Barbichon and Ravaude, excellent animals, male and female."

"Oh!" said Sir John; "they are not dead, I hope?"

"Ah, yes; but imagine what my good mother has done" (and he took Madame de Montrevel's head in his two hands and kissed her on both cheeks); "she would not let them drown a single puppy, because, she said, they were the dogs of my dogs. So the result is, my dear friend, that the pups and grand-pups and great-grand-pups of Barbichon and Ravaude are as numerous in the land as the descendants of Ishmael, and there is not a pair of dogs only, but a whole kennel at your service, — twenty-five hounds of one breed, all black as moles, with white feet, fire in their eyes and hearts, and a regiment of cornet tails it would do you good to see."

Thereupon Roland gave a flourish on his trumpet, which brought in little Édouard at full speed.

"Oh!" he cried breathlessly, "are you going to hunt to-morrow, brother Roland? Can I go? Yes, I'm going! I'm going!"

"But do you know what kind of hunt it is?"

"No; I only know I'm going."

"We are going to hunt a boar."

"Oh, joy!" cried the child, clapping his hands vigorously.

"But you are crazy!" said Madame de Montrevel, turning pale.

"How so, mamma? Please say."

"Because it is very dangerous to hunt a wild-boar."

"Not so dangerous as to hunt war; and my big brother Roland has got back safe from that. I shall get back safe to-morrow."

"Roland," said Madame de Montrevel, while Amélie, lost in thought, took no part in the discussion, "Roland,

make Édouard listen to reason; tell him he has n't common-sense."

But Roland, who recognized himself in the child, instead of blaming him smiled at his boyish courage.

"I would take you willingly," he said; "but before you hunt you must learn how to manage a gun."

"Ho, ho! Monsieur Roland," cried Édouard, "come down into the garden and put your hat at a hundred paces, and I'll show you how to manage a gun."

"Dreadful child!" cried Madame de Montrevel, trembling all over; "where did you learn it?"

"Why, from the gunsmith at Montagnat, where papa's guns and Roland's are. You ask me sometimes what I do with my money. Well, I buy powder and balls and practise how to kill Austrians and Arabs like my brother Roland."

Madame de Montrevel threw up her hands.

"Ah, mother," cried Roland, "you can't help it; blood tells. There was never a Montrevel afraid of powder. You shall go with us to-morrow, Édouard."

"And I," said Sir John, "will arm you to-day like a regular huntsman. I have a charming little rifle which I will give you; it will keep you contented till your sabre and pistols come."

"Well, does that please you, Édouard?" asked Roland.

"Yes; but when will he give it to me? If he has to write to England for it, I sha'n't believe him."

"No, my young friend, I have only to get my gun-case out of the carriage and open it; and that is soon done."

"Then let us get it now."

"Very good!" said Sir John; and he went out, followed by Édouard.

A moment later Amélie, still absorbed in thought, rose and left the room.

Madame de Montrevel tried to persuade Roland not to take his little brother on the morrow. But Roland explained that if the boy was to be a soldier like his father

and brother, the sooner he learned the management of weapons and grew familiar with powder and ball, the better. The discussion was not ended when Édouard came running back with his rifle slung over his shoulders.

"See, brother," he said to Roland, "see the beautiful present Sir John has given me!" And he looked back gratefully at the giver, who stood in the doorway vainly searching with his eyes for Amélie.

It was indeed a magnificent present. The rifle, designed with that sobriety of ornament and simplicity of form peculiar to English weapons, was of the finest finish. Like Sir John's pistols, the extreme accuracy of which Roland had already appreciated, it was made by Manton, and carried a bullet of 24 calibre. It must have been intended for a woman; and this was proved by the shortness of the butt-end and the velvet pad on the trigger. This original destination of the weapon made it suitable for the figure of a boy of twelve. Roland took it from the shoulder of his little brother, looked at it knowingly, tried its action, sighted it, threw it from one hand to the other, and then, giving it back to Édouard, said: —

"Thank Sir John again; he has given you a rifle that is worthy of the son of a king. Let us go and try it."

All three went out to do as Roland said, leaving Madame de Montrevel as sad as Thetis when she saw Achilles in his woman's garment pull the sword of Ulysses from its scabbard. A quarter of an hour later Édouard returned triumphantly. He brought his mother a bit of pasteboard of the circumference of a hat, in which he had put ten balls out of twelve at fifty paces. The two men had stayed behind in the park, conversing.

Madame de Montrevel listened to Édouard's slightly boastful account of his prowess, looking at him with that wistful, saintly sadness of mothers to whom glory is no compensation for the blood it sheds. Oh! ungrateful indeed is the child who has once seen that look fixed upon him and does not eternally remember it. Then, after a few seconds

of painful contemplation she pressed her youngest child to her heart, and murmured, sobbing:—

“You, too, — oh, yes; some day you too will desert your mother.”

“Yes, mother,” said the boy, “to become a general like my father, or an aide-de-camp like brother Roland.”

“And to be killed as your father was killed and as your brother will be.”

For that was a never-ending dread to this poor woman, added to her other anxieties, among which we must class the pallor and absent-mindedness of Amélie.

Amélie was just seventeen; her earliest years were those of a laughing child, healthy and joyous. The death of her father had cast for a time a black veil over her youth and gayety; but such spring storms had passed. The smile, the sunshine of the dawning life returned like that of nature to sparkle on the dew of the heart which we call tears. Then suddenly one day — it was about six months before our story opens — the girl’s face saddened, her cheeks grew pale, and just as birds that migrate fly to other climes in wintry weather, the girlish laughter of those rosy lips departed, never to return.

Madame de Montrevel questioned her daughter; but Amélie declared herself the same as ever. She tried to smile; but as a stone thrown into a lake makes rings upon the water which slowly disappear, the smiles, roused only by her mother’s uneasiness, faded little by little from her face. With a mother’s instinct Madame de Montrevel thought of love; but who could love her, — whom could she love? No visitors were ever admitted to the château des Noires-Fontaines; political troubles had put an end to all society, and Amélie went nowhere. Madame de Montrevel could go no farther than conjecture. Roland’s return had given her a momentary hope; but even that was disappearing as she watched the effect which this event was evidently producing on her daughter. It was no longer a sister, but a spectre who met him. Since Roland’s arrival

Madame de Montrevel had watched Amélie incessantly, and with sorrowful astonishment she saw the effect produced on the sister by the brother's presence; she, whose eyes were formerly always seeking Roland and always full of love, now seemed to see him with a sort of terror. Only a few moments since, Amélie had profited by her first chance to leave the salon and retire to her own room, the only spot in the house where she seemed to feel at ease, and where, for the last six months, she had passed most of her time. The dinner-bell alone had the power to bring her out of it, and even then she delayed her coming till the last stroke sounded.

The day had been spent by Roland and Sir John in visiting Bourg, as we have seen, and in making preparations for the hunt of the morrow. From early morning until mid-day they were to beat the woods; from mid-day till nightfall they were to hunt the boar. Michel, the gardener, an experienced huntsman, just now tied to his chair by a sprain, felt better at the prospect, and had himself hoisted on to a little horse kept for the errands of the house, that he might collect the beaters from Saint-Just and Montagnat. He himself, being unable either to beat or hunt, meant to stay with the hounds and with the horses of Sir John and Roland and Édouard's pony about the middle of the forest, which was intersected by one good road and two practicable pathways. The beaters who could not follow the hunt were to return to the château with the game-bags.

The next morning at six the beaters were ready before the door. Michel was not to start until eleven with the dogs and horses.

The château des Noires-Fontaines is at the very edge of the forest of Seillon. The sport could begin almost as soon as they left the gates. As the battue promised chiefly deer and hares, the guns were loaded with ball. Roland gave Édouard a simple little gun which had been his own when a boy; he had not yet confidence enough in the child to trust him with a double-barrelled weapon. As

for the rifle Sir John had given him the day before, it could only carry cartridges, and was therefore given into Michel's safe keeping, to be returned to him in case they put up a boar for the second part of the hunt. For this part, Roland and Sir John were also to change their guns for double-barrelled rifles and for hunting-knives, pointed as daggers, sharp as razors, which were part of Sir John's arsenal and could either be hung from the belt or screwed on the barrel of the guns, like bayonets.

From the beginning of the battue it was easy to see that the day would be a successful one. A roebuck and two hares were killed at once. Two boars were seen; but in answer to two balls they only shook their bristles and disappeared. Édouard was in the seventh heaven; he had shot the deer. By noon, as agreed upon, the beaters, well rewarded for the trouble they had taken, returned to the château with the game. A sort of bugle was sounded to discover where Michel was. Michel replied to it. In less than ten minutes the three huntsmen had found him with the horses and the hounds.

Michel, it seemed, had seen a boar; he had made his son head it off, and it was now in the woods not a hundred paces distant.

Jacques, the son, was sent to beat the wood with the heads of the pack, Barbichon and Ravaude. At the end of about five minutes the boar was found in his lair. He might have been killed at once, but that would have ended the hunt too quickly; and the huntsmen now launched the whole pack at the animal, who, seeing this troop of little pygmies rushing at him, started away at a slow trot. He crossed the road; Roland gave the view-halloo, and as the animal took the direction of the Chartreuse of Seillon, the three riders followed the path which went through the length of the wood. The boar now led them a chase which lasted till five in the evening, for the beast was evidently unwilling to leave a forest so full of undergrowth.

At last the violent barking of the dogs seemed to show

that the boar was at bay. The spot was not a hundred paces away from the pavilion belonging to the Chartreuse, in one of the most tangled parts of the forest. It was impossible to force the horses through it, and the riders therefore dismounted. The barking of the dogs guided them; from time to time cries and yelps of pain showed that some of the attacking party had gone too near and received the reward of their temerity. About twenty steps from the scene of the drama the hunters began to see the actors in it. The boar was backing against a rock so as not to be attacked from behind; bracing himself on his fore-paws he faced the dogs with his scarlet eyes and his two enormous tusks. The dogs were pressing and tumbling before him, around him, on him, like a moving carpet. Five or six, more or less badly hurt, were staining the battle-field with their blood, though still attacking the boar with a tenacity and courage which might serve as an example to the bravest of men.

Each hunter faced the scene with the characteristic signs of his age, disposition, and nation. Édouard, the most imprudent and also the smallest of the three, finding his little person no obstacle, had scrambled through the undergrowth and arrived the first. Roland, indifferent to danger of any kind, followed him. Sir John, slower, graver, more reflecting, brought up the rear.

No sooner did the boar get sight of the huntsmen than he seemed to pay no more attention to the dogs. He fixed his eyes, gleaming and sanguinary, upon them; but the only movement which he made was the snapping of his jaws, as he brought them together with a threatening sound. Roland looked at the sight for an instant as if inclined to fling himself, knife in hand, into the midst of the group and cut the beast's throat, as a butcher does that of a calf or a pig.

His impulse was so evident that Sir John caught his arm, while Édouard shouted:—

“Oh, brother, let me fire at him!”

Roland controlled himself.

"Very good," he said, leaning his gun against a tree, and using only his knife which he drew from its sheath; "fire! Pay attention now!"

"Don't be afraid," said the child, through his clenched teeth, his face pale but resolute, and lifting the barrel of his rifle to the animal's level.

"If he misses or only wounds him," remarked Sir John, "you know that brute will be upon us before we can see him through the smoke."

"I know that; but I'm accustomed to hunts like these," replied Roland, his nostrils dilated, his eyes flaming, his lips half-open. "Fire, Édouard!"

The shot followed the order instantly; but on the instant, perhaps before it, the boar, rapid as lightning, sprang upon the child. A second shot was heard. Then, amid the smoke, the angry eyes of the animal were seen gleaming. But as it rushed it met Roland, one knee on the ground, and knife in hand. An instant, and a tangled, formless group rolled on the earth, man and boar, boar and man, clinging together. Then a third shot rang out, followed by a laugh from Roland.

"Ah, Sir John!" he cried; "you've wasted that powder and ball. Don't you see the brute is ripped up? Only, do get his body off me; he weighs four hundred at least, and he is smothering me."

But before Sir John could stoop to do it, Roland, by a vigorous movement of his shoulders, threw aside the carcass and rose, covered with blood but without a scratch. Little Édouard, whether from want of time or from native courage, had not recoiled an inch. It is true that he was completely protected by his brother, who had flung himself before him. Sir John had sprung aside to take the animal in the flank, and he now looked at Roland, shaking himself after this second duel, with the same astonishment he had felt after the first.

The dogs—those that remained, about twenty of them

— had followed the boar, and were now leaping at his body, trying, but in vain, to tear the mass of erect bristles, which were almost as impenetrable as iron.

“You will see,” said Roland, wiping the blood from his face and hands with a cambric handkerchief, “how they will eat him and my knife, too, Sir John.”

“True,” said Sir John; “where is the knife?”

“In its sheath,” said Roland, laughing.

“Ah!” cried the boy, “I see it; there’s only the handle sticking out.”

And springing up to the animal, he pulled out the knife which, as he had said, was buried to the hilt. The sharp point, aimed by a calm eye, and driven by a vigorous hand, had pierced to the animal’s heart. There were three other wounds. The first, made by the boy’s shot, was shown by a bloody furrow above the eye; the ball had been too weak to break the frontal bone. The second came from Sir John’s first shot; the ball had taken the animal diagonally and grazed his breast. The third, aimed at close quarters, went through his body, but, as Roland had said, not until after he was killed.

XIV.

AN UNWELCOME COMMISSION.

THE hunt was over; darkness was coming on, and the object now was to return home. The horses were near by; they could be heard neighing impatiently. They seemed to be asking why their courage was so doubted that they were not allowed to share in the exciting drama.

Édouard was bent on dragging the boar to the horses, putting it on the back of one of them, and so carrying it back to the château; but Roland pointed out to him that it was much easier to send two men with a barrow to fetch the carcass. Sir John thought so too, and Édouard — who never ceased pointing to the wound in the head and saying, “That’s my shot; I aimed there” — was forced to yield to the will of the majority. The three hunters soon returned to where the horses were fastened, and mounting them, were back at the château des Noires-Fontaines in about ten minutes.

Madame de Montrevel was on the portico watching for them. For over an hour the poor mother had been there, trembling lest some harm had overtaken one or the other of her sons. The moment Édouard spied her he put his pony at a gallop, crying out: —

“Mother! mother! we’ve killed a boar as big as a donkey. I fired at his head; you shall see the hole my ball made. Roland stuck his hunting-knife into the boar’s belly up to the hilt. Quick! quick! send men to fetch him. Don’t be afraid, mother, when you see Roland all covered with blood; it is only the boar’s blood. Roland has n’t a scratch.”

All this was said with his accustomed volubility, while Madame de Montrevel was crossing the open space between the portico and the road to open the iron gates. She meant to take Édouard in her arms; but he, jumping off his pony, caught her round the neck. Roland and Sir John came up at this moment, and just then Amélie appeared on the portico.

Édouard left his mother to fret herself about Roland, whose appearance, all covered with blood, was certainly alarming, and rushed to tell his sister the tale he had rattled off to his mother. Amélie listened with an absent-minded manner, which probably hurt his vanity, for he presently precipitated himself into the kitchen to recount the affair to Michel, who was certain to listen to him eagerly.

Michel was indeed interested to the highest degree; but when Édouard, after telling him the place where the boar was killed, gave him Roland's order to send men to fetch the carcass, he shook his head.

"Well, what?" cried Édouard; "do you refuse to obey my brother?"

"God forbid, Monsieur Édouard; Jacques shall go at once to Montagnat."

"Are you afraid he can't get men?"

"Bah! he could get a dozen. But the trouble is the time of night and the place the carcass is in. You say it is close to the pavilion of the Chartreuse?"

"Not a hundred feet away."

"I had rather it were a couple of miles," replied Michel, scratching his head. "But never mind, I'll send for the men without telling them where they are going. Once here, hang it! your brother must make them go."

"Yes, yes, yes; let them come here and I'll make them go, I will!"

"Oh!" said Michel, "if I had n't this cursed sprain I'd go myself; but to-day's work has made it worse. Jacques! Jacques!"

Jacques came, and Édouard only waited to hear the order given that he was to go to Montagnat and fetch men, when he departed and ran to his room to do that which Roland and Sir John were already doing, that is, dress for dinner.

The whole talk at table, as may easily be imagined, was about the day's prowess. Édouard asked nothing better than to tell of it; and Sir John, delighted with the courage, ability, and, above all, the happiness about him, improved upon the child's narrative. Madame de Montrevel shuddered at each detail, and yet she made them repeat it a dozen times. The point that struck her most was that Roland had evidently saved the life of his brother.

"Did you thank him?" she said to the child.

"Thank whom?"

"The big brother."

"Why should I thank him?" asked Édouard. "He did just what I should have done."

"Ah, madame, you cannot help yourself!" said Sir John; "you are a doe who has given birth to a race of lions."

Amélie had also paid great attention to the tale, especially after she heard that the hunters had been close to the Chartreuse. From that moment she listened with anxious eyes, and seemed not to breathe until they told of leaving the woods after the killing.

Just as dinner was over, word was brought that Jacques had returned with two peasants from Montagnat. The peasants wanted exact directions where to find the animal. Roland rose to go out to them; but Madame de Montrevel, who could never see enough of her son, turned to the messenger and said, "Bring those worthy men in here; it is not worth while to disturb Monsieur Roland." Five minutes later the two peasants entered the dining-room, twirling their hats in their hands.

"My men," said Roland, "I want you to go into the

forest of Seillon and bring back the carcass of the boar we have just killed."

"That can be done," said one of them, consulting his companion with a look.

"Yes, that can be done," said the other.

"Don't be uneasy," continued Roland; "you shall not take the trouble for nothing."

"Oh, we are not uneasy," said one of the peasants; "we know you, M. de Montrevel."

"Yes," said the other; "you don't make men work for nothing, any more than your father did. Oh! if all the aristocrats had been like you, there would n't have been a revolution, Monsieur Louis."

"No, that there would n't," said the other, who seemed to be the affirmative echo of his companion.

"Now we want to know just where the animal is," said the first peasant.

"Yes," said the second; "we want to know where it is."

"It is not difficult to find."

"So much the better," said the men.

"You know the pavilion in the forest?"

"Which?" said the first peasant.

"Yes, which?" said the second.

"The pavilion which belongs to the Chartreuse."

The two peasants looked at each other.

"Well, you'll find the brute about twenty paces from the side of the pavilion toward the Genoud wood."

The peasants looked at each other again.

"Hum!" grunted one.

"Hum!" grunted the other, faithful echo of his comrade.

"Well, what?" asked Roland.

"Confound it!"

"Come, explain yourself; what's the matter?"

"It is this, Monsieur Louis; we would rather it was the other end of the forest."

"That is a fact," said the other.

"But why the other end of the forest?" continued Roland, impatiently. "It is nine miles from here to the other end, and not one mile to where the boar lies."

"Yes," said the first peasant; "but the place where the boar lies —" He stopped and scratched his head.

"Yes, just so," said the other.

"Just what?" cried Roland.

"It is too near the Chartreuse."

"I told you the pavilion, not the Chartreuse."

"It is all the same; you know, Monsieur Louis, they say there is a subterranean passage from the Chartreuse to the pavilion."

"Yes, there is one; that's sure," said the second peasant.

"Well," said Roland, "and if there is, what have the Chartreuse, the pavilion, and the subterranean passage to do with the boar?"

"Why, just this, that it is a bad place for the boar to be in."

"Come now, explain yourselves, you rascals!" cried Roland, who was beginning to get angry, while his mother seemed uneasy and Amélie visibly turned pale.

"Beg pardon, Monsieur Louis, but we are not rascals; we are men who fear God, and that's the whole of it."

"Heavens and earth!" cried Roland; "I, too, fear God. What of that?"

"We don't want to have dealings with the devil."

"No, no, no!" said the second peasant.

"A man can match a man, if he is his own kind," said the first peasant.

"Sometimes two," said the second, who was shaped like a Hercules.

"But with ghostly beings, phantoms, spectres, — no thank you!" said the first peasant.

"No, thank you!" echoed the second.

"Ah, mother! sister!" cried Roland, addressing the

two women, "in Heaven's name, tell me if you know what these fools are talking about?"

"Fools!" exclaimed the first peasant; "that may be, but it is none the less true that Pierre Marey for even looking over the wall of the Chartreuse had his neck twisted. It is true it was of a Saturday, the devil's sabbath —"

"And they could n't straighten it," said the second peasant; "so they had to bury him with his face turned round and looking behind him."

"Oh, oh!" exclaimed Sir John, "this is interesting; I like ghost stories."

"You are not like Sister Amélie, then. Look at her!" cried Édouard; "is n't she pale?"

"Yes, indeed," said Sir John. "Mademoiselle must be ill."

"I? Not at all," exclaimed Amélie; "only — Don't you think, mamma, it is very hot here?" and she wiped her forehead, which was moist with perspiration.

"No," replied Madame de Montrevel.

"Still," insisted Amélie, "if it would not annoy you, I should like to open the window."

"Do so, my dear."

Amélie rose hastily to profit by the permission, and went with tottering steps to open a window toward the garden. After it was opened she stood leaning against the sill, half hidden by the curtains.

"Ah!" she murmured, "here at least I can breathe."

Sir John rose to offer her his smelling-salts, but she said hastily: —

"No, no, thank you; I am very much better."

"Well, about the boar, Monsieur Louis; we will fetch it to-morrow."

"That's it," said the second man, "to-morrow, at day-break."

"But to-night —"

"Oh! to-night —"

The peasant looked at his comrade, and both declared at the same moment, shaking their heads: —

“To-night it can’t be done.”

“Cowards!”

“Monsieur Louis, a man is not a coward because he is afraid.”

“No, that don’t make a coward,” said the other man.

“Ha!” cried Roland; “I wish some stronger men than you faced me down with that theory, — that a man is not a coward because he is afraid.”

“That’s according to what he is afraid of, Monsieur Louis. Give me a good sickle and a good cudgel and I am not afraid of a wolf; give me a good gun and I am not afraid of a man, even if I knew that that man was waiting to murder me.”

“Yes,” said Édouard; “but you are afraid of a ghost, even a monk’s ghost.”

“Little Master Édouard,” said the peasant, “do you let your brother talk; you are not old enough to joke about such matters yet.”

“No,” added the other; “wait till your beard is grown, little gentleman.”

“I have n’t a beard on my chin,” said Édouard, drawing himself up, “but that would n’t prevent me, if I were strong enough, from fetching that boar myself, whether it was day or night.”

“Much good that would do you, my young gentleman. At any rate, my companion and I, we tell you plainly we would n’t go for a louis.”

“Would you go for two?” said Roland, determined to sift the matter out.

“Not for two, nor four, nor ten, Monsieur de Montrevel. Ten louis are good; but what should I do with your ten louis if my neck was wrung?”

“Yes, like Pierre Marey,” said the other man.

“Ten louis would n’t give bread to my wife and children for the rest of their days, would they?”

"And if you had the ten louis," said the second peasant, "they would only be five, for five would be mine."

"Are there ghosts in the pavilion?" asked Roland.

"I don't say there are any in the pavilion, — I'm not sure about the pavilion; but in the Chartreuse —"

"In the Chartreuse you are sure?"

"Oh, yes; sure!"

"Have you seen them?"

"No; but some persons have."

"Your comrade?" inquired Roland, turning to the second peasant.

"I have not seen ghosts, but I have seen flames; and Claude Philippon has heard chains."

"Ha! ha! flames and chains!" cried Roland.

"Yes, I've seen flames, too," said the first peasant.

"And Claude Philippon heard the chains," repeated the second.

"Very good, my friends; very good," said Roland, in a jeering tone. "Then you positively will not go to-night at any price?"

"Not at any price."

"Not for all the gold in the world."

"And you will go to-morrow at daybreak?"

"Oh, Monsieur Louis, the boar shall be here long before you are up."

"Well, then," said Roland, "come and see me day after to-morrow."

"Willingly, Monsieur Louis; but what do you want us to do?"

"Never mind, come."

"Oh, we'll come."

"The moment you say 'Come,' Monsieur Louis, we are sure not to miss."

"Well, I'll give you then some positive information —"

"What about?"

"Those ghosts."

Amélie gave a stifled cry; Madame de Montrevel alone

heard it. Roland dismissed the peasants with a wave of his hand, and they jostled each other in the doorway, which they tried to go through together.

Nothing more was said that evening of the Chartreuse or the pavilion, nor of the supernatural beings, spectres or phantoms, who haunted them.

XV.

A STRONG MIND.

By ten o'clock every one was in bed at the château des Noires-Fontaines, or, at any rate, they had all retired to their rooms.

Two or three times in the course of the evening Amélie had approached Roland, as if she had something to say to him; but the words seemed to die upon her lips. When the family left the salon she took his arm, and though his room was on the floor above hers, she accompanied him to the door of it. There Roland kissed her, bade her good-night, declaring himself very tired, and closed the door.

But in spite of his declaration he did not proceed to undress. He went to his collection of arms, picked out a magnificent pair of pistols, manufactured in Versailles and presented to his father by the Convention, and snapped the triggers and blew in the barrels to see that there were no old charges in them. The pistols were in excellent condition. He then laid them side by side on the table, opened his door softly, looked toward the staircase to see if any one was watching, and finding that the corridor and stairway were both deserted, he went along the passage and knocked at Sir John's door.

"Come in," said the Englishman.

Sir John, like himself, had not prepared for bed.

"I knew by that sign you made me," said Sir John, "that you had something to say to me; so, as you see, I have waited for you."

"Indeed, I have something to say to you," replied Roland, flinging himself gayly into an arm-chair.

"My dear Roland," said the Englishman, "I am beginning to understand you. When I see you as gay as you are now, I feel like your peasants — frightened."

"You heard what they said?"

"I heard them tell a splendid ghost story. I have, myself, a haunted castle in England."

"Have you ever seen a ghost, Sir John?"

"Yes, when I was a small boy. Unluckily, since I have grown up they have all disappeared."

"That's the way of ghosts," said Roland, gayly; "they come and they go. What a bit of luck, is n't it, that I should have come back just in time to see the ghosts in the Chartreuse of Seillon?"

"Yes," said Sir John; "it is very lucky, — if you are sure there are any."

"No, I am not sure; but I shall be sure the day after to-morrow."

"How so?"

"I intend to pass to-morrow night down there."

"Oh!" said the Englishman; "would you like me to go with you?"

"It would give me great pleasure; but, unfortunately, the thing is impossible."

"Why impossible?"

"Do you know the manners and customs of ghosts, Sir John?" said Roland, gravely.

"No."

"Well, I know them; ghosts only appear under certain conditions."

"Explain."

"Well, for instance, in Italy, the most superstitious country in the world, there are no ghosts, or, if there are any, they are only seen once in ten years, twenty years, a century."

"To what do you attribute their absence?"

"To the absence of fogs."

"Ha! ha!"

“Not a doubt of it. You understand, the native atmosphere of ghosts is fog and mist. Scotland, Denmark, England, regions of fog, are overrun with ghosts. There is the ghost of Hamlet’s father, Banquo’s ghost, the ghosts of the victims of Richard the Third. In Italy there is but one, Cæsar’s ghost, and that never appeared except to Brutus, at Philippi in Macedonia, in Thrace, — that is to say, in the Denmark of Greece, the Scotland of the Orient, where fog made Ovid so melancholy that he named the odes he wrote there ‘Tristia.’ Why did Virgil make the ghost of Anchises appear to Æneas? Because Virgil came from Mantua. Do you know Mantua? — a marsh, a regular frog pond, a manufactory of rheumatism, an atmosphere of mists; consequently, a nest of phantoms.”

“Go on; I’m listening.”

“Have you ever seen the banks of the Rhine?”

“Yes.”

“Germany, that part?”

“Yes.”

“A land of fairies, ondines, sylphs, and ghosts (for whoso does the greater see can see the less); well, all that is because of the incessant fog. But in Italy and in Spain, where the devil could the ghosts hide? There is not one scrap of mist. So that if I were in Spain or Italy I should n’t attempt the adventure I am going upon to-morrow.”

“But all that does not tell me why you refuse my company,” said Sir John.

“Wait. I have now explained to you that ghosts never risk themselves in certain countries, because their atmospheric conditions are wanting; let me further explain the precautions we must take if we want to see them.”

“Oh, yes; explain, explain!” cried Sir John. “Really, Roland, I would rather hear you talk than any other man I know.”

And Sir John stretched himself out in his easy-chair, prepared to listen with delight to the impulsive talk of

that fantastic mind, which he had seen under so many aspects during the few short days they had been together.

Roland bent his head by way of thanks.

"Well, this is how it is," he said, "and you will soon see it. I have heard so much about ghosts in my life that I understand the scamps as if I had made them. Why do ghosts appear?"

"Are you asking me?" inquired Sir John.

"Yes, I'm asking you."

"I own that not having studied ghosts as you have, I am unprepared with an answer."

"I thought so. Ghosts appear, my dear Sir John, in order to frighten those who see them."

"That is undeniable."

"Yes; but if they don't frighten those to whom they appear, it is those to whom they appear who frighten them, — witness M. de Turenne, whose phantoms proved to be false coiners. Do you know that story?"

"No."

"I'll tell it to you some other time; don't let us get mixed up. Now that is why, after ghosts decide to appear (which is seldom), they generally choose stormy nights, when it thunders and lightens and blows; that's their scenery."

"I admit all that to be eminently true."

"Now wait. There are moments when the bravest man feels a shudder through his veins; it has happened to me a dozen times when I have seen the flash of sabres above my head and heard the thunder of the cannon about me. Now ghosts know this; they know that the sense of fear increases or diminishes according to the seeing and hearing of exterior things. For example, where do phantoms prefer to appear? In dark places, cemeteries, old cloisters, ruins, subterranean passages, because the aspect of such localities predisposes the human mind to fear. What precedes their appearance? Usually the rattling of chains, moans, sighs, because there is nothing very cheerful in

all that. They take good care not to appear in a blaze of light or the middle of a country dance. No; fear is an abyss down which you go step by step until a giddiness takes you, until your foot slips, and you fall with closed eyes to the bottom of the precipice. So if you read the accounts of all apparitions you will find that they proceed in this way, — first the heavens darken, the thunder growls, the wind whistles, the doors and windows rattle, the lamp (if there is a lamp in the room of the person whom the ghost means to frighten), the lamp flares up, then gets dim, and goes out — utter darkness! Then in the darkness moans, wails are heard, and the rattling of chains; then, at last, the door opens, the ghost enters! I must say that all the apparitions I have, not seen, but read of presented themselves under just those circumstances. — Is n't that so, Sir John?"

"Yes, exactly."

"Did you ever hear of a ghost appearing to two persons at the same time?"

"I never did."

"That's easily explained. Two persons together have no fear. Fear is a strange, mysterious thing, independent of the will, and needing for its development solitude, darkness, and isolation. A ghost cannot be more dangerous than a cannon-ball. Well, is a soldier afraid of a cannon-ball by daylight, when his elbows touch a comrade to right and left? No; he goes up to the battery. He is killed or he kills. Now ghosts don't want that. This is the reason why they never choose to appear to two persons at once, and it is also why I want to go to the Chartreuse alone, Sir John; your presence would prevent the boldest ghost from appearing. If I don't see anything, or if I see anything worth the trouble of following up, you shall have your turn the next night. Will that satisfy you?"

"Perfectly; but why can't I take the first night?"

"Ah! because the idea did n't come to you first, and it is only just I should have the profits of my own idea."

Besides, I belong to this region; I was friendly with all those good monks in their lifetime, and there may be a chance that they would like to appear to me after death. Moreover, as I know the localities, if it becomes necessary to run away or pursue, I can do either better than you. Don't you see the justice of that?"

"Yes, it is quite fair; but am I sure of going the next night?"

"The next night and the night after and every day and night you like; all I hold to is the first. Now," continued Roland, rising, "this is all between ourselves, is n't it? Not a word to any one; the ghosts might hear of it and act accordingly. It would never do to let those jolly dogs get the best of us, — that would be too grotesque."

"I'm not afraid of that. You will go armed, of course?"

"If I thought I were really to deal with ghosts, I should go with my hands in my pockets, and nothing in my fobs; but, as I told you just now, I remember M. de Turenne's sort of ghosts, and therefore I shall carry pistols."

"Do you want mine?"

"No, thank you. Yours are good, but I am half resolved never to touch them again. Good-night, Sir John; I mean to sleep soundly so as not to want any sleep to-morrow night."

Then, after shaking the Englishman's hand vigorously he left the room and returned to his own. There he was greatly surprised to see the door, which he was certain he had left shut, open. But as soon as he entered the room the sight of his sister explained the matter to him.

"Bless me!" he exclaimed, half-surprised, half-uneasy; "is it you, Amélie?"

"Yes," she said, "it is I." Then approaching her brother and letting him kiss her forehead, she added, in a supplicating tone, "You won't go there, will you, dear Roland?"

"Go where?"

"To the Chartreuse."

"Who told you I was going?"

"Oh! to any one who knows you it is n't hard to guess it."

"Why do you want me not to go to the Chartreuse?"

"I am afraid something may happen to you."

"Ho! do you believe in ghosts, — you?" cried Roland, looking fixedly into his sister's eyes.

Amélie looked away, and Roland felt her hand trembling in his.

"Look here," said Roland; "my sister Amélie, at any rate the one I used to know, the daughter of General de Montrevel, is much too intelligent to give way to vulgar terrors; it is quite impossible that you can believe these stories of apparitions, chains, flames, spectres, phantoms."

"If I did believe them, Roland, I should be much less alarmed. If ghosts exist, they must be souls without their bodies; consequently they cannot bring from the grave their material hatreds. Besides, why should a ghost hate you, Roland, — you, who never did harm to any one?"

"You forget all those I have killed in war or in duels."

Amélie shook her head.

"I am not afraid of them."

"Then what are you afraid of?"

"I don't know, Roland," she said; "but I am afraid."

The young man raised her head, which she was hiding in his breast, with gentle force, and said, kissing her eyelids softly and tenderly: —

"You know that they are not ghosts I mean to fight to-morrow?"

"Brother, don't go to the Chartreuse!" cried the girl, evading his question.

"Mother has told you to say that; confess it, Amélie."

"Oh, brother, no; my mother does not know a word of it. It is I who have guessed where you mean to go."

"Well, if I mean to go, Amélie, you ought to know by this time that I shall go."

“Even if I beseech you on my knees, brother?” said Amélie, in a tone of anguish, slipping down to her brother’s feet.

“Oh, women! women!” muttered Roland, “inexplicable creatures, whose words are all mystery, whose lips never tell their real secrets, who weep and pray and tremble — why? God may know, but man does n’t. I shall go, Amélie, because I have resolved to go; and when I have once taken a resolution no power on earth can make me change it. Now kiss me, and don’t be frightened.”

Amélie raised her head, gave her brother a fixed, despairing look, and left the room, sobbing.

XVI.

THE GHOST.

THE next evening the young aide-de-camp, after convincing himself that every one in the château des Noires-Fontaines had gone to bed, opened his door softly, went down the staircase holding his breath, reached the vestibule, slid the bolts of the outer door noiselessly, stepped off the portico, and then turned round to make sure that all was still. The darkened windows satisfied him, and he boldly opened the iron gate. The hinges had probably been oiled that day, for they turned without grating and closed again noiselessly on Roland, who now walked rapidly in the direction of the Pont d'Ain at Bourg.

He had hardly gone a hundred yards before the clock at Saint-Just struck once; that of Montagnat answered like a bronze echo. It was half-past ten o'clock. At the pace the young man was walking, he needed only twenty minutes to reach the Chartreuse, especially if, instead of skirting the woods, he took the path which led straight to the monastery. Roland was too familiar from his youth with these bridle-paths to lengthen his walk by ten minutes. He therefore turned and cut across the woods, coming out on the other side in about five minutes. Once there, he had only to cross a bit of open ground to reach the orchard wall of the convent. This took barely another five minutes.

At the foot of the wall he stopped, but only for a few seconds. He unhooked his cloak, rolled it up, and threw it over the wall. The cloak off, he stood in a velvet coat, white leather breeches, and top-boots. The coat was fas-

tened round the waist by a belt in which were a pair of pistols. A broad-brimmed hat covered his head and shaded his face.

With the same rapidity with which he had thrown off a garment that might have hindered his climbing the wall, he now began to scale it. His foot found a chink between the stones, and he sprang up, seized the coping with one hand, and was over on the other side without even resting on the wall, having bounded over it. Once down he picked up his cloak, threw it over his shoulders, hooked it, and crossed the orchard to a little door which communicated with the cloister. The clock struck eleven as he passed through it. Roland stopped, counted the strokes, and slowly walked round the cloister, looking and listening.

He saw nothing and heard no noise. The monastery was a picture of desolation and solitude; the doors were all open, — those of the cells, that of the chapel, that of the refectory. In the refectory, a vast hall where the tables still stood in their places, Roland noticed five or six bats. A frightened owl flew through a broken window and perched on a tree close by, uttering its melancholy cry.

“Good!” said Roland, aloud. “I’ll make my headquarters here; bats and owls are the vanguard of ghosts.”

The sound of that human voice, lifted in the midst of this darkness, desolation, and solitude, had something so unnatural, so lugubrious about it that it might have made even the speaker shudder if Roland had not been, as he said himself, inaccessible to fear. He looked about him for a place where his eyes could take in the whole hall. An isolated table, placed on a sort of stage at one end of the refectory, which had no doubt been used by the superior of the convent to take his food apart from the monks, or to read from pious books during the meals, seemed to Roland the place he needed. Backed by a wall he could not be surprised from behind, and from that point, as soon

as his eye grew accustomed to the darkness, he could survey every part of the hall. He looked for a seat, and found an overturned stool about three feet from the table, — probably the one used by the reader or the person dining there in solitude.

Roland sat down before the table, unfastened his cloak for greater freedom of movement, took his pistols out of his belt, laid one before him, and striking three blows on the table with the butt-end of the other pistol, he said in a loud voice: —

“The meeting is opened; the ghosts can now appear.”

Those who have passed through graveyards and churches in the dark with friends have often felt, without perhaps analyzing it, that supreme necessity to speak low and reverently which attaches to certain localities. Such persons will understand the strange impression produced on any one who heard it by the curt, mocking tones of the voice which now disturbed the solitude and the shadows. It vibrated for an instant in the darkness which seemed to quiver with it; then it slowly died away, without an echo, escaping by all the many openings made by the wings of time.

Roland's eyes became, as he expected, used to the darkness; and now, thanks to the moon, which had just risen and was penetrating the refectory through its broken windows in long white rays, he was able to see distinctly from one end to the other of the vast apartment. Though Roland was as evidently without fear inside as he had been outside of those walls, he was not without distrust; his ears were attentive to every sound.

He heard the half-hour strike. In spite of himself the sound made him quiver, for it came from the clock of the convent. How was it that in this ruin, where all was dead, a clock, that pulse of time, was living?

“Oh! oh!” said Roland; “that tells me that I shall see something.”

The words were spoken almost as an aside. The majesty

of the place and of the silence acted upon that heart of iron, firm as the iron tongue which had just tolled the call of time upon eternity. The minutes slowly passed, one after another. Perhaps a cloud was passing between the earth and moon, for Roland thought the shadows deepened. Then he fancied that he heard, as midnight approached, a thousand imperceptible sounds, confused and diverse, coming, no doubt, from that nocturnal universe which wakes while the other sleeps. Nature will not permit suspension of life, even for rest. She has her nocturnal world as well as her daily world, from the gnat which buzzes about the sleeper's pillow, to the lion prowling around the Arab's bivouac.

Roland, the camp watcher, the sentinel in the desert, Roland the huntsman, Roland the soldier, knew all those sounds; they were powerless to disturb him. But suddenly, mingling with them, the tones of the clock again vibrated in the air above his head.

It was midnight. Roland counted the twelve strokes, one after another.

The last hung quivering in the air like a bird with iron wings; then the sound slowly expired, sadly, sorrowfully. Just then the young man thought he heard a moan. He listened in the direction from which it seemed to come. It was evidently coming nearer.

He rose. Both hands rested on the table, and beneath the palm of each was the butt-end of a pistol. A rustle like that of a sheet or a gown trailing on grass was clearly audible on his left, about ten paces from him. He straightened himself erect as though moved by a spring.

At the same moment a Shade appeared on the threshold of the vast hall. This Shade was like the ancient statues lying on the tombs. It was wrapped in a winding-sheet, which trailed behind it.

For an instant Roland doubted his own eyes. Had the absorption of his mind made him see a thing that was not? Was he the dupe of his senses, the sport of hallucinations,

which physicians assert but cannot explain? A moan uttered by the phantom put his doubts to flight.

"Ha! ha!" he cried in a burst of laughter, "now for a tussle, friend ghost!"

The spectre stopped and extended a hand to the young officer.

"Roland, Roland!" it said, in a hollow voice, "it would be a pity not to follow to the grave those you have sent there."

Then, without hastening its step, the spectre continued on its way.

Roland, astounded for a moment, came down from his platform and pursued it. The way was difficult, encumbered with stones, benches standing about, and tables overturned. And yet through all these obstacles a path seemed to open for the spectre, which continued on, unchecked, unhasting.

Each time it passed a window the light from without, feeble as it was, shone on the shroud and outlined the phantom, which passed into obscurity as it left the window, only to reappear again at the next. Roland, his eyes fixed on the figure he pursued, fearing to lose sight of it if he diverted them even for an instant, could not see the way, apparently so easy to the spectre, yet bristling with obstacles for him. He stumbled at every step. The ghost was outstripping him. It reached the door opposite to that by which it had entered. Roland saw the entrance to a dark passage; he felt that the Shade would escape him.

"Man or ghost, robber or monk," he cried, "stop, or I fire!"

"A dead man cannot be killed twice, and death has no power over spirits," said the Shade, in muffled tones.

"Who are you?"

"The Shade of him you violently tore from earth."

Roland burst out laughing in his strident laugh, made more terrible by the darkness around him.

"Upon my word," he said, "if you have no other indica-

tion to give me, I shall not trouble myself to discover you."

"Remember the fountain of Vaucluse," said the Shade, in so faint a voice that the words seemed to issue from his lips like a sigh rather than in articulate words.

For an instant Roland felt, not his heart failing him, but the sweat rolling off his forehead. Making an effort over himself he recovered his strength and said in a threatening voice: —

"For the last time, apparition or reality, I warn you that if you do not stop, I fire."

The Shade did not pause, but continued its way.

Roland paused to take aim. The spectre was ten paces from him. Roland was a sure shot. He himself had loaded his pistols, and only a moment before he had looked to the charge and seen it was right.

As the spectre passed, tall and white, under the gloomy archway of the corridor, Roland fired. The flash illumined the passage like lightning; the spectre was seen passing on, still with unhasting step. Then all was darker than before. The ghost disappeared in the blackness.

Roland rushed down the passage in pursuit, changing the second pistol from his left hand to his right. But short as the pause had been, the spectre had gained ground. Roland saw it at the end of the corridor, this time against the gray background of the night. He increased his speed and reached the end of the passage just as the spectre disappeared through the door of a cistern. Roland redoubled his speed. Reaching the door it seemed to him that the ghost was plunging into the bowels of the earth. But the upper part of his body was still visible.

"Devil or not," cried Roland, "I'll follow you."

And he fired his second shot, which filled the cavernous space down which the ghost had plunged with flame and smoke.

When the smoke cleared away Roland looked about him. He was alone. He sprang into the cistern, howling

with rage. He sounded the walls with the butt-end of his pistol; he stamped with his feet upon the earth. Walls and earth gave back the sound of solid objects. He strained his eyes to see through the obscurity; but it was impossible. The feeble moonlight which filtered downward stopped at the first steps to the cistern.

“Oh!” cried Roland; “a torch! a torch!”

No one answered. The only sound to be heard was that of the spring bubbling close beside him. He saw that further search would be useless and he left the cavern. Drawing a powder-horn from his pocket, and two balls, he reloaded his pistols. Then he took the path along which he had just come, found the dark passage, then the refectory, and again took his place at the end of the silent hall, and waited.

But the hours of the night sounded successively, until they became the morning hours, and the first gleams of the dawning day cast their pallid tones upon the walls of the cloister.

“Well,” muttered Roland, “it is all over for to-night. Perhaps another time I shall have better luck.”

Twenty minutes later he re-entered the *château de Noires-Fontaines*.

XVII.

FURTHER SEARCH.

Two persons were awaiting Roland's return, — one in anguish, the other with impatience. They were Amélie and Sir John. Neither the one nor the other had slept for an instant. Amélie betrayed her anguish only by the sound of her door which was furtively closed when Roland's step was heard on the staircase.

Roland heard the sound. He had not the heart to pass his sister's door without reassuring her.

"You can be easy now, Amélie," he said; "I'm here."

It did not occur to his mind that his sister could be anxious for any one but him.

Amélie darted from her room in her night-dress. It was easy to see, from the pallor of her skin and the dark circles which had spread to the middle of her cheeks, that she had never closed an eye all night.

"Has nothing happened to you, Roland?" she said, pressing her brother in her arms and feeling him over anxiously.

"Nothing."

"Neither to you nor to any one?"

"Neither to me nor to any one."

"And you saw nothing?"

"I did n't say that."

"Good God! what did you see?"

"I'll tell you all about it later; meantime, there is no one either killed or wounded."

"Ah! I breathe again."

"Now, if I may give you a bit of advice, little sister, go to bed and sleep, if you can, till breakfast time. That's

what I shall do; and I'll warrant you it won't take much rocking to put me to sleep. Good-night, or rather, good-morning."

Roland kissed his sister tenderly; then affecting to whistle a hunting air carelessly, he ran up the stairs to the second story. Sir John was frankly waiting for him in the corridor. He went straight to the young man.

"Well?" he said.

"Well, I have n't exactly rolled my stone for nothing."

"Did you see a ghost?"

"I saw something that resembled one."

"You are going to tell me all about it at once?"

"Yes, I understand; you won't sleep at all or you will sleep ill if I don't tell you. Here it is, in a dozen words, just as it all happened."

And Roland gave an exact and circumstantial account of his night's adventure.

"Good!" said Sir John, when Roland had finished; "you have left something for me to do at any rate."

"I am even afraid," said Roland, "that I have left you the hardest part."

Then, as Sir John asked many questions about the relative positions of the localities, he said:—

"To-day, after breakfast, we will pay a visit to the Chartreuse in broad daylight, which will help you to study the localities. Only, you must tell no one."

"Oh!" cried Sir John, "do I look like a gabbler?"

"No, that's true," said Roland; "you are not a gabbler, but I'm a ninny." So saying, he retired to his bedroom.

After breakfast the two men sauntered down the slopes of the garden as if to take a walk along the banks of the Reyssouse; then they bore to the left, came up the hill for about forty paces, struck into the high-road, then through the woods, till they reached the orchard-wall at the very place where Roland had scaled it the night before.

“Sir John,” said Roland, pointing to the wall, “here is the way.”

“Then let us take it,” replied Sir John.

Slowly, with a wonderful strength of wrist, which proved him to be a man who was thoroughly trained in gymnastics, the Englishman laid hold of the coping, swung himself to the top of the wall, and dropped on the other side. Roland followed, with the rapidity of a man who is not doing a feat for the first time. They were both on the other side, within the convent's precincts. The desertion and desolation were more visible by day than by night. The grass was growing in the paths as high as a man's knee; the espaliers were tangled with vines, now so thick that the grapes could not ripen in the shade of the leaves; in many places the wall was giving way, and ivy, the parasite rather than the friend of ruins, was spreading everywhere.

As for the trees in the open space, plums, peaches, apricots, they had grown with the freedom of oaks and beeches in a forest, and their sap, entirely absorbed in the branches, which were many and vigorous, produced hardly any fruit, and what there was, was imperfect.

Roland led his friend straight to the door between the cloister and the orchard; but before entering the cloister, he turned to look at the face of the convent clock. That clock, which to his knowledge was going the night before, was now stopped. From the cloister they entered the refectory. There, the daylight showed under their true aspect the various objects which the darkness had clothed with fantastic forms the night before. Roland pointed out to Sir John the overturned seats, the table marked by the hammer of the pistol, the door by which the ghost had entered. He followed, accompanied by the Englishman, the way he had taken in pursuit of the phantom; he saw what the obstacles were over which he had stumbled, and noticed how easily they could be crossed or avoided by any one used to the locality.

When they reached the spot where he had fired, he found the wad, but it was quite impossible for him to find the bullet. The arrangement of the corridor, which turned in a slanting direction, made it impossible for the bullet, if its marks were not on the wall, to have missed the ghost, and yet if the ghost were hit, supposing it to be a solid body, how came it to remain upright? Was it wounded or unwounded? And if wounded, where was the blood? There was no trace of either blood or ball.

Sir John was almost brought to admit that his friend had had to do with a veritable ghost.

"Some one may have come here after me and picked up the ball," remarked Roland.

"But if you fired at a man why did n't the ball go into him?"

"Oh! that's explainable enough; the man wore a coat of mail under his shroud."

This was possible; but Sir John shook his head doubtfully; he seemed to prefer believing in a supernatural event, — it gave him less trouble.

Roland and he continued their investigations, which brought them to the end of the corridor which opened on the farthest extremity of the orchard. It was there that Roland had seen his spectre for an instant, as it disappeared in the dark vault. He now went straight to the cistern. There he understood how the darkness of the night had seemed to deepen; all reflection from without was absent; even by daylight it was impossible to see distinctly.

Roland drew from beneath his cloak two torches about a foot long, took a flint, lighted the tinder, and a match from the tinder. Both torches flared up. He gave one to the Englishman.

The problem now was to discover the way by which the ghost had disappeared. Roland and Sir John lowered their torches to the bottom of the cistern, which was paved with large squares of limestone apparently well joined

together. Roland looked for his second ball as persistently as he had hunted for the first. A loose stone lay under his feet; he pushed it aside and saw an iron ring fastened into one of the limestone blocks. Without a word Roland slipped his hand through the ring, braced himself on his feet, and pulled. The block turned on its pivot with an ease which proved that it was often subjected to the same manipulation. As it turned, it disclosed the entrance to a subterranean passage.

“Ah!” cried Roland, “this is the way my spectre went.”

And down he went into the yawning passage. Sir John followed him. They took the same way that Morgan had taken when he returned to give account of his expedition. At the end of the passage they came upon the iron gate which opened into the burial vaults. Roland shook it; it was not locked, and it opened. They then crossed the vault and came to the second iron gate; like the first it was open. Roland was first; they went up several steps and found themselves in the choir of the chapel, where the scene we have related between Morgan and The Company of Jehu took place; only, the stalls were now empty, the choir deserted, and the altar, degraded by the abandonment of worship, was no longer covered by the sacred cloth or the burning tapers.

It was evident to Roland that this was the goal of the false ghost, which Sir John was inclined to think a real one. But real or false, Sir John admitted that its flight had brought it to this particular spot. He reflected an instant and then remarked:—

“As it is my turn to watch to-night, I have the right to choose my ground; I shall watch here.”

And he pointed to a sort of table, formed in the centre of the choir by an oaken pedestal which formerly supported the eagle lectern.

“Yes,” said Roland, with the same heedlessness he showed in his own affairs, “you’ll do very well there;

only, as you may find the gates locked and the stone fastened to-night, we had better look for some other way to get here."

In less than five minutes an outlet was found. The door of an old sacristy opened into the choir, and from the sacristy a broken window gave passage into the forest.

"Here's what we want," said Roland; "but as you cannot possibly find your way at night in a forest you could scarcely cross by day, I shall come with you here."

"Yes; but the moment I get in you are to leave me," said the Englishman. "I remember what you said about the susceptibility of ghosts; if they know you are near by they may hesitate to appear; and as you have seen one, I insist on seeing at least one myself."

"I'll leave you,—don't be afraid," said Roland. "Only," he added, "I do fear one thing."

"What is that?"

"That in your double capacity as Englishman and heretic they won't feel at ease with you."

"Ah!" returned Sir John, gravely, "what a pity I have n't time to abjure!"

The two friends had seen all there was to see, and they now returned to the château. No one, except Amélie, had suspected that their walk was other than an ordinary one. The day passed without questions and without apparent anxiety; besides, it was already late when the gentlemen came home. At dinner, to Édouard's great joy, another hunt was proposed; and it made the subject of conversation for the rest of the evening. By ten o'clock, as usual, all had retired to their rooms, except Roland who was in that of Sir John.

The difference of characters showed itself markedly in the preparations of the two men. Roland had made them joyously, as for a pleasure trip; Sir John made his gravely, as though for a duel. He loaded his pistols with the greatest care and put them into his belt, and instead of a cloak which might have impeded his motions, he

wore an English top-coat with a high collar, put on over his other coat.

At half-past ten the pair left the house with the same precautions which Roland had taken when he went alone. It was five minutes before eleven when they reached the broken window of the sacristy. There, according to agreement, they were to part. Sir John reminded the young man of his promise.

"Yes," said Roland, "an agreement is an agreement with me, once for all. Only, I have a piece of advice to give you."

"What is it?"

"I could not find my bullets because some one has been here and carried them off; and that person carried them off to prevent me from seeing the dents that are no doubt on them."

"What sort of dents do you mean?"

"Those of the links of a coat of mail; my ghost was a man in armor."

"I am sorry for that," said Sir John; "I hoped for a ghost."

After a moment's silence and a sigh expressive of his deep regret at resigning a ghost, the Englishman said:—

"What was your advice?"

"Fire at his face."

Sir John nodded, shook hands with the young officer, clambered through the window and disappeared in the sacristy.

"Good-night!" called Roland after him.

Then, with that indifference to danger which a soldier usually feels for himself and his companions, Roland did as he had promised, and took the way back to the château des Noires-Fontaines.

XVIII.

THE TRIAL.

THE next day Roland, who had stayed awake till two in the morning, awoke about seven. He recalled his scattered senses, and remembering what had passed he felt astonished that Sir John had not come into his room when he returned, and roused him. He dressed quickly and went to Sir John's room, at the risk of waking him out of his morning nap.

He knocked at the door. No answer. He knocked again. Same silence. This time some uneasiness mingled with Roland's curiosity. The key was in the lock. The young man opened the door and cast a rapid look around the room. Sir John was not there; he had not returned. The bed was undisturbed. What had happened?

There was not an instant to lose; and we may be sure that Roland, with that rapidity of resolution which we already know in him, did not lose an instant. He sprang into his room, finished dressing, put his hunting-knife into his belt, slung his rifle over his shoulders, and went out. No one was yet awake except the chambermaid. Roland met her on the staircase.

"Tell Madame de Montrevel," he said, "that I have gone into the forest with my gun; and she is not to be uneasy if neither I nor Sir John get back in time for breakfast."

Then he darted away rapidly. In ten minutes he was at the window of the sacristy where he had parted from Sir John the night before. He listened; no sound came from within; the huntsman's ear could detect the morning woodland sounds, but no other. Roland climbed into the

window with his usual agility, and rushed through the sacristy into the choir.

One look sufficed to show him that not only the choir but the whole space of the chapel was empty. Had the spectres led the Englishman along the reverse of the way he had come himself? Possibly. Roland passed rapidly behind the altar, and reached the gate of the vaults; it was open. He entered the subterranean cemetery; darkness hid its depths. He called Sir John by name three times. No answer.

He reached the second gate; it was open like the first. He entered the passage; there he took his hunting-knife in his hand. Feeling his way he went farther and farther, meeting no one; but the farther he went the deeper the darkness, which surely indicated that the stone in the cistern was closed.

He reached the steps; mounted them until his head came in contact with the stone; then he made an effort, — the block turned. He saw daylight and leaped into the cistern. The door which opened into the orchard was open. Roland went through it, crossed that portion of the orchard which lay between the cistern and the corridor at the other end of which he had fired at his phantom. He passed along the corridor and entered the refectory. The refectory was empty.

Again Roland called three times. The astonished echo, which seemed to have forgotten the tones of the human voice, answered stammering. Sir John could not have come that way; it was necessary to go back. Roland did so, and again found himself in the choir of the chapel. That was where Sir John had determined to watch, and there some trace of him must be found.

Roland advanced only a short distance, and then a cry escaped him. A large spot of blood was at his feet, staining the pavement. On the other side of the choir, a dozen feet from the blood that lay at his feet, was another stain not less large, nor less red, nor less recent; it seemed to make a pendant to the first.

One of these stains was to right, the other to left of the oaken pedestal formerly used, as we have said, to support the lectern, — the pedestal Sir John had selected as his place of waiting. Roland went to it; it was drenched with blood. This, then, was the spot where the drama had taken place; a drama which, if all signs were true, must have been terrible.

Roland, in his double capacity of soldier and huntsman, was keen at a quest. He could calculate the amount of blood lost by a man who was killed outright, and that lost by one who was only wounded. That night three men had fallen, dead or wounded. What were the probabilities?

The two stains on the floor, to left and right of the pedestal, were probably the blood of two of Sir John's assailants. The blood on the pedestal was probably his. Attacked on both sides, right and left, he must have fired with both hands, and killed or wounded a man with each shot. Hence the blood which reddened the pavement. He himself must have been struck beside the pedestal, on which his blood had spurted.

After a few seconds of examination, Roland was as sure of all this as though he had seen the struggle with his own eyes. Now, what had been done with the bodies? About two of them Roland cared little enough; but he must know what had become of that of Sir John.

A track of blood started from the pedestal and led to the entrance. Evidently Sir John's body had been carried out. Roland shook the massive door. It was only latched and it yielded to his first pressure. Outside the sill the tracks of blood continued. Roland could see, through the underbrush, a path by which a body had been carried. The broken branches, the trampled herbage led Roland to the edge of the wood on the road leading from Pont d'Ain to Bourg. There the body, living or dead, seemed to have been deposited on the bank of the roadside ditch. Beyond that, no traces whatever.

A man passed, coming from the direction of the Noires-Fontaines; Roland went up to him.

“Have you seen anything on the road? Did you meet any one?” he inquired.

“Yes,” said the man, “I saw two peasants carrying a body on a litter.”

“Ah!” cried Roland, “was it that of a living man?”

“The man was pale and did not move; he looked as if he were dead.”

“Was the blood flowing?”

“I saw some on the road.”

“In that case, he is living.”

Then taking a louis from his pocket, he said, —

“There’s a louis for you; go as fast as you can to Doctor Milliet at Bourg; tell him to get a horse and come at full speed to the château des Noires-Fontaines. You can add that there is a man there in danger of dying.”

While the peasant, stimulated by the reward, made all haste to Bourg, Roland, leaping along on his vigorous legs, was nearing the château.

And now, as our readers are, in all probability, as anxious as Roland to know what had become of Sir John, we shall give an account of the events of the night.

Sir John Tanlay entered, as we have seen, a few minutes before eleven the pavilion of the Chartreuse, commonly called La Correrie, which was nothing more than a chapel erected in the woods. From the sacristy he went into the choir. The choir was empty and seemed solitary. A rather brilliant moon, which disappeared at times under a cloud, sent its bluish rays through the cracked and broken colored glass of the pointed windows. Sir John walked to the middle of the choir, stopped before the pedestal, and remained standing. The minutes rolled away; but this time it was not the convent clock which marked the time, it was the church at Péronnaz, that is to say, the nearest village to the chapel where Sir John was watching.

Everything happened up to midnight as it had to Roland; Sir John heard only the vague murmurings of the breeze, and passing noises.

Midnight struck: it was the moment he awaited with impatience, for it was that at which something would happen, if anything did happen. As the last stroke sounded he fancied he heard footsteps underground and saw a light appearing through the gate which led to the cemetery vaults. His whole attention was fixed on that spot.

A monk issued from the passage, his hood lowered over his eyes, and bearing in his hand a torch. He wore the dress of a chartreux. A second monk followed him, then a third, and so on; Sir John counted twelve. They separated before the altar. There were twelve stalls in the chapel; six on the right of Sir John, six on his left. The twelve monks silently took their places in the twelve stalls. Each planted his torch in a hole made for the purpose in the oaken desk, and waited.

A thirteenth monk appeared and took his stand before the altar.

None of these monks assumed the fantastic behavior of ghosts or phantoms; they all belonged undoubtedly to earth, and were living men.

Sir John, standing erect, a pistol in each hand, his back against the pedestal, watched with the utmost coolness this manœuvre, which tended to surround him. The monks were standing, like himself, erect and silent.

The monk at the altar broke silence.

“Brothers,” he asked, “why are the Avengers summoned?”

“To judge a spy.”

“What crime has he committed?”

“He has tried to discover the secrets of The Company of Jehu.”

“What penalty has he incurred?”

“Death.”

The monk at the altar waited, apparently to give time for the sentence to reach the heart of him whom it concerned. Then, turning to the Englishman, who continued as calm as if he were at a comedy, he said:—

“Sir John Tanlay, you are a foreigner, you are an Englishman, — a double reason why you should leave The Company of Jehu to fight its battle with the government it has sworn to destroy. You have failed in wisdom; you have yielded to idle curiosity; instead of keeping out of danger you have entered the lion’s den, and the lion rends you.”

Then, after a moment’s silence, during which he seemed to expect an answer from the Englishman, but received none, he added: —

“Sir John Tanlay, you are condemned to death; prepare to die.”

“Ah, ha! I see that I have fallen among thieves. If so, I can buy myself off by a ransom.” Then turning to the monk at the altar, he said, “What will you take, captain?”

A threatening murmur greeted these insolent words. The monk at the altar stretched forth his hand: —

“You are mistaken, Sir John; we are not a band of thieves,” he said in a tone as composed and calm as that of the Englishman; “and the proof is that if you have money and jewels upon you, you need only give me your instructions and they will be remitted either to the person you may designate or to your family.”

“And what guarantee shall I have that my wishes will be obeyed?”

“My word.”

“The word of a leader of assassins! I do not believe it.”

“You are mistaken, Sir John, as you were before. I am no more the leader of assassins than I am a captain of thieves.”

“Who are you then?”

“The elect of celestial vengeance; I am the envoy of Jehu, king of Israel, who was anointed by the prophet Elisha to destroy the house of Ahab.”

“If you are what you say you are, why do you veil your face? Why do you wear armor beneath your clothes?”

The elect strike openly; they risk death in giving death. Lay off your hoods, show me your naked breasts, and I will admit that you are what you pretend to be."

"Brothers, you have heard him," said the monk at the altar.

Then, stripping off his gown he opened his coat, his waistcoat, and even his shirt. Each monk did the same and stood with his face exposed and his breast bare. They were all fine, handsome young men, the eldest not more, apparently, than thirty-five years old. Their dress was elegant; one thing was noticeable, however, — none were armed. They were there to judge, and for no other purpose.

"Be satisfied, Sir John Tanlay," said the monk at the altar, "you will die; but in dying, you can as you wished, recognize and kill your judges. You have five minutes in which to prepare your soul for death."

Instead of profiting by this permission to think of his eternal salvation, Sir John tranquilly examined his pistols, cocked and uncocked them to be sure of the triggers, and passed a ramrod down each barrel to be certain the balls were there. Then, without waiting for the five minutes to expire, he called out: —

"Gentlemen, I am ready; are you?"

The young men looked at each other; on a sign from their chief they walked straight to Sir John and surrounded him on all sides. The monk at the altar remained motionless in his place, commanding the scene that was about to take place by his eye.

Sir John had but two pistols, consequently he could kill but two men. He took aim and fired. Two of The Company of Jehu fell on the pavement, which they reddened with their blood. The others advanced as if nothing had happened, extending their hands upon Sir John.

Sir John had taken his pistols by the muzzle and was using them like clubs. He was vigorous; the struggle was long. For ten minutes a confused group tussled in the

centre of the choir; then this violent commotion ceased, the Companions of Jehu drew apart to right and left and regained their stalls, leaving Sir John bound with their girdles and lying on the pedestal of the lectern.

"Have you commended your soul to God?" asked the monk at the altar.

"Yes, villain!" cried Sir John, "you may strike."

The monk took a dagger from the altar, advanced with lifted arm, and standing over Sir John, held the dagger above his breast.

"Sir John Tanlay," he said, "you are a brave man; you will doubtless keep faith. Swear that not a word of what you have seen shall ever pass your lips; swear that under no circumstances, whatsoever they may be, you will recognize any of us, and we will grant you your life."

"As soon as I am out of here," said Sir John, "I shall denounce you; the moment I am free I will hound you down."

"Swear!" repeated the monk.

"No!" said Sir John.

"Swear!" said the monk for the third time.

"Never!" said Sir John.

"Then die, since you will it!"

And he drove the dagger to the hilt into the Englishman's breast, who, whether by force of will or because the blow killed him instantly, uttered no sound. Then the monk in a loud, sonorous voice, the voice of a man who was conscious of having done his duty, called out:—

"Justice is done!"

And he returned to the altar, leaving the dagger in the wound.

"Brothers," he said, "I give notice that you are invited to the ball of the Victims, which takes place in Paris at No. 60 rue du Bac on the 21st of January next, in memory of the death of King Louis XVI."

So saying he re-entered the subterranean passage, followed by the remaining ten monks bearing their torches.

An instant later four serving-brothers entered. First, they raised the bodies of the two monks and took them into the sepulchre; then they returned, lifted that of Sir John, laid it on a stretcher, and took it out of the chapel by the entrance door, which they closed after them. Two of the four monks marched in front of the stretcher, bearing the torches left behind by the Jehu brethren.

And now, if our readers ask why there was so much difference between the treatment received by Roland and that administered to Sir John, why such mercy to one, such severity to the other, we reply:—

Remember that Morgan had enjoined on his brethren the safety of Roland, and that Roland, thus protected, could not under any circumstances die by the hand of a Companion of Jehu.

XIX.

THE LITTLE HOUSE IN THE RUE DE LA VICTOIRE.

WHILE they are bearing the body of Sir John Tanlay to the château des Noires-Fontaines ; while Roland is rushing in the same direction ; while the peasant is hurrying to Bourg to notify Dr. Milliet of the catastrophe which demanded his immediate presence, let us jump the distance between Bourg and Paris, and the time which elapsed between the 16th of October and the 7th of November, — that is to say, between the 24th Vendémiaire and the 16th Brumaire, — and enter, about four in the afternoon, the little house in the rue de la Victoire, made historically famous by the conspiracy of the 18th Brumaire, which issued from it fully armed and equipped.

It is the same house which stands there to-day, on the right of the street and numbered 60, apparently astonished to present to the eye of the curious passer, after so many changes of government, the consular fasces which may still be seen on each panel of its double oaken door. Let us follow the long and narrow alley of lindens which leads from the gate on the street to the door of the house ; there let us enter the antechamber, take the passage to the left and ascend the twenty stairs which lead to a study hung with green paper, and furnished with curtains, chairs, and sofas of the same color. The walls are covered with maps and plans of cities. Bookcases of maple are on either side of the fireplace, which they enclose ; the chairs and sofas, the tables and desks are heaped with books ; there is scarcely room on the seats to sit down, or to write at the desks and tables.

In the midst of this encumbering mass of letters, reports, pamphlets, and books, a man had cleared for himself a space, where he was now seated, clutching his hair impatiently, as he endeavored to decipher a page of notes beside which the hieroglyphics on the obelisk of Luxor would have seemed as plain as the Roman alphabet. At the moment when the secretary's impatience was approaching desperation the door opened, and a young officer in the dress of an aide-de-camp entered the room.

The secretary raised his head and a lively expression of satisfaction crossed his face.

"Oh, my dear Roland," he said, "here you are, at last! I am delighted to see you, for three reasons: first, because I was wearying for you; second, because the general is very impatient for your return, and keeps up a hullabaloo about it; and third, because you can help me to decipher this word, over which I've been groaning for the last ten minutes — but first, and above all, kiss me." And the secretary and the aide-de-camp kissed each other.

"Now, then, let me see the word that defies you, my dear Bourrienne," said Roland.

"Ah, my dear fellow, what a handwriting! I get a white hair for every page I copy; this is the third to-day. There, read it if you can."

Roland took the sheet from the secretary and fixing his eyes on the place shown to him, he began to read quite fluently: —

"'Section XI. The Nile, from Assouan to a distance of twelve miles north of Cairo, flows in a single stream' — Well," said Roland, interrupting himself, "all that's plain sailing. What do you mean? The general took pains when he wrote that."

"Go on, go on?" said Bourrienne.

"'From that point which is called — called' — Ah, ha!"

"Now you've got it!"

Roland repeated, "'which is called' — the devil! — 'called' —"

“Yes,” said Bourrienne, “called what?”

“What will you give me, Bourrienne,” cried Roland, “if I guess it right?”

“I’ll give you the first colonel’s commission I find signed in blank.”

“Faith, no, I won’t have it; I don’t wish to leave the general; it is better to have a good father than five hundred unruly sons. I’ll give you your three words for nothing.”

“Three! are there three?”

“They don’t look as if there were quite two, I admit that. Now listen and make obeisance to me. ‘From the point called *Ventre della Vacca*’ —”

“Ha! *Ventre de la Vache*! Confound it! he’s illegible enough in French, but if he takes it into his head to write Italian, and the Corsican patois to boot, I shall go crazy or run the risk of becoming stupid. Well, you’ve got it!” and he read the sentence through consecutively: “‘The Nile, from Assouan to a distance of twelve miles north of Cairo, flows in a single stream; from that point, which is called *Ventre de la Vache*, it forms the branches of the Rosetta and the Damietta.’ Thank you, Roland;” and he began to write the end of the paragraph, the beginning of which was already committed to paper.

“Tell me,” said Roland, “is he still after his hobby, the dear general, colonizing Egypt?”

“Yes, yes; and then, as a sort of make-weight, governing France. Oh, yes, we shall colonize Egypt, — from a distance.”

“My dear Bourrienne, do tell me the state of things in this country, or I shall seem like a savage arriving from Timbuctoo.”

“In the first place tell me, — did you come back of your own accord, or have you been recalled?”

“Recalled? I should think so!”

“By whom?”

“The general himself.”

“Special despatch?”

“Written by himself; see!”

The young man pulled from his pocket a paper containing two lines, not signed, in the same handwriting as that over which Bourrienne had been puzzling. The two lines said: —

“Start. Be in Paris 16th Brumaire. I want you.”

“Yes,” said Bourrienne; “I think it will be on the 18th.”

“What will be on the 18th?”

“Upon my word, Roland, you ask more than I know. He is not, as you are aware, communicative. What will take place on the 18th Brumaire? I don’t know as yet, but I am certain it will be something.”

“Oh, you must have some idea!”

“I think he means to make himself Director in place of Sieyès; possibly president instead of Gohier.”

“Good! How about the Constitution of the year III.?”

“The Constitution of the year III., — what of that?”

“Why, it says a man must be forty years old to be a Director; and the general lacks just ten of them.”

“So much the worse for the Constitution, damn it! They must violate it, that’s all.”

“It is too young, Bourrienne; you would n’t violate a child of seven.”

“My dear fellow, in Barras’s hands everything grows old fast. The little girl of seven is already an old prostitute.”

Roland shook his head.

“What now?” said Bourrienne.

“Well, I don’t think our general will make himself a mere Director with four colleagues. Just imagine it, — five kings of France! It would n’t be a Directory any longer, but a four-in-hand.”

“At any rate, that is all he has allowed any one to perceive so far; but you know, my dear friend, that if we want to find out the general’s secrets we must guess them.”

“Faith, yes; and I’m too lazy to take the pains,” said Roland, laughing. “Besides, I’m a regular Janissary, — what will be, will be. Why the devil should I trouble myself to have an opinion, or to battle for it?” The young man enforced his remarks with a long yawn, and then he added, “Where’s the general?”

“With Madame Bonaparte; he came down a quarter of an hour ago. Have you let him know you are here?”

“No; I wanted to see you first. But wait; I hear his step now.”

At the same instant the door was opened abruptly, and the same historical personage whom we saw playing a silent part incognito at Avignon entered the room, wearing the picturesque costume of the general-in-chief of the Army of Egypt, except that, being in his own house, he was bareheaded. Roland thought his eyes were more hollow and his skin more leaden than usual. But the moment that he noticed the young man the gloomy, or rather the meditative eye of General Bonaparte emitted a flash of joy.

“Ah! here you are, Roland,” he said; “faithful as steel. Called, you come. Welcome.”

He held out his hand to the young man. Then, with an almost imperceptible smile, he added: —

“What were you doing with Bourrienne?”

“Waiting for you, general.”

“And while waiting you were gossiping like two old women.”

“I’ll admit it, general. I showed him my order to be here on the 16th Brumaire.”

“Did I say the 16th or the 17th?”

“Oh, the 16th, general; the 17th would have been too late.”

“Why too late?”

“Because, hang it! Bourrienne says great things are to happen on the 18th.”

“There!” muttered Bourrienne; “that scatter-brain will earn me a wiggling.”

“Ha! did he tell you I had a project for the 18th?”

Going up to Bourrienne, he took him by the ear.

“Tell-tale!” he said. Then, turning to Roland, he added: “Well, yes, my dear boy; we have great plans for the 18th. My wife and I dine with the president Gohier, an excellent man, who was very polite to Josephine in my absence. You are to go with us, Roland.”

Roland looked at Bonaparte.

“Was it for that you recalled me, general?” he said, laughing.

“For that, yes; and perhaps for something else. Bourrienne, write —”

Bourrienne hastily seized his pen.

“Are you ready?”

“Yes, general.”

MY DEAR PRESIDENT, — I write to let you know that my wife and I and one of my aides-de-camp will dine with you the day after to-morrow, the 18th. This is merely to say that we shall be quite satisfied with a family dinner.

“What next?” said Bourrienne.

“How do you mean, next?”

“Ought n’t I to put ‘Liberty, equality, fraternity —’?”

“‘Or death!’” added Roland.

“No,” said Bonaparte; “give me the pen.”

He took the pen from Bourrienne’s hand, and wrote “Ever yours, Bonaparte.” Then pushing away the paper he added, “There, direct it, Bourrienne, and send an orderly with it at once.”

Bourrienne wrote the address, sealed the note, and rang the bell. An officer on duty entered.

“Send an orderly with that,” said Bourrienne.

“He is to wait for an answer,” added Bonaparte.

The officer closed the door.

“Bourrienne,” said the general, pointing to Roland, “look at your friend.”

“Well, general, so I do.”

“Do you know what he did in Avignon?”

“I hope he did n’t make a pope.”

“No; he flung a plate at a man’s head.”

“Oh, that was lively!”

“But that ’s not all.”

“I presume not.”

“He fought a duel with that man.”

“And he killed him, of course,” said Bourrienne.

“Of course; but do you know why?”

“No.”

The general shrugged his shoulders and said:—

“Because the man said I was a thief.” He looked at Roland with an indefinable expression of mischief and affection. “Ninny!” he said. Then, after a moment, as if recollecting something, he added, “By the bye, that Englishman?”

“Ah! exactly, general; I was just going to speak of him.”

“Is he still in France?”

“Yes, and I did think for a time that he was going to stay here till the last trump sounded the reveille in the valley of Jehosaphat.”

“Did you miss killing him?”

“Oh, no; it was n’t I. We are the best friends in the world. And, general, he is such an excellent man, and so original to boot, that I am going to ask you for a little bit of a favor for him.”

“The devil! for an Englishman?” Bonaparte shook his head. “I don’t like the English,” he said.

“Not as a nation, I grant you; but as individuals—”

“Well, what of him, your friend?”

“He has been tried, condemned, and executed.”

“What the devil are you telling me?”

“God’s truth, general.”

“Do you mean to say he has been tried, condemned, and guillotined?”

“Oh, not exactly: tried and condemned, yes; guillo-

tined, no. If he had been guillotined he would be more dangerously ill than he is now."

"Now explain what you are gabbling about. What court condemned and executed him?"

"That of The Company of Jehu."

"Who are The Company of Jehu?"

"Have you already forgotten our friend Morgan, — the masked man, who brought back the two hundred louis at the table d'hôte at Avignon?"

"No," exclaimed Bonaparte, "I have n't forgotten it. Bourrienne, I told you, did n't I, about that fellow's daring?"

"Yes, general," said Bourrienne; "and I replied that if I had been in your place I should have tried to find out who he was."

"And the general would have found out if he had let me do as I wanted. I was just going to spring at his throat and tear his mask off, when the general said, in that tone you know, 'Sit down, Roland.'" "

"Come, get back to your Englishman, chatterer!" exclaimed the general. "Did this Morgan murder him?"

"He did not; but his companions did."

"You spoke just now of a court that tried him."

"General, you are the same as ever," said Roland, with a remnant of their old school familiarity; "you want to know a thing and you don't give time to have it told to you."

"Get elected to the Five Hundred, and you can talk as much as you like."

"Pooh! then I should have four hundred and ninety-nine colleagues who would all want to talk too, and would take the words out of my mouth. I would rather be interrupted by you than by a lawyer."

"Go on."

"Very good. Now, imagine, general, there's a Chartreuse close to Bourg —"

"I know that, — the Chartreuse de Seillon."

“What! do you know the Chartreuse de Seillon?” cried Roland.

“The general knows everything!” said Bourrienne.

“Well, about the Chartreuse,” said Bonaparte. “Are there any monks there now?”

“No; only ghosts —”

“Is it a ghost-story you are going to tell me?”

“Yes, and a famous one.”

“The devil! Bourrienne knows I love them. Go on.”

“Well, we were told there were ghosts in the convent. You can easily believe that we wanted to clear our minds, Sir John and I, — or rather, I and Sir John. So we each took a night to spend there.”

“Spend where?”

“Why, the convent, of course.”

Bonaparte made an almost imperceptible sign of the cross with his thumb, — a Corsican habit, which he never lost.

“Ha, ha!” he cried; “and so you saw ghosts?”

“I saw one.”

“What did you do to it?”

“Fired at it.”

“And then?”

“It walked away.”

“And you allowed yourself to be baffled?”

“Ha! that shows how well you know me! I followed it and fired again; but as it knew the way through the ruins better than I did, it got away from me.”

“The devil it did!”

“The next day it was Sir John’s turn, — I mean our Englishman.”

“Did he see the ghost?”

“He saw something better. He saw twelve monks, who entered the church, arraigned him for trying to discover their secrets, condemned him to death, and then, on my word of honor, stabbed him!”

“Did he defend himself?”

“Like a lion, and killed two.”

“Is he dead?”

“Almost; but I hope he'll get over it. Just fancy, general, some peasants found him by the roadside and took him back to my mother, with a dagger planted in his breast like a prop in a vineyard.”

“Why, it is like a scene of the Sainte-Vehme, neither more nor less.”

“On the handle of the dagger was engraved, so that there might be no mistake as to who did the deed, the words, ‘Company of Jehu.’”

“It is n't possible that such things can happen in France in the last year of the eighteenth century! It might do for Germany in the Middle Ages, in the days of the Henrys and Othos —”

“Not possible, do you say? Well, here's the dagger; what do you say to that? Pretty, is n't it?”

And the young man pulled from under his coat a dagger made entirely of steel, blade and handle.

The handle was shaped like a cross, and on the blade, sure enough, were engraved the words, “Company of Jehu.”

Bonaparte examined the weapon carefully.

“And you say they planted that plaything in the breast of your Englishman?”

“To the hilt.”

“And he is n't dead?”

“Not yet, at any rate.”

“Do you hear that, Bourrienne?”

“With immense interest.”

“You must remind me of it, Roland.”

“When, general?”

“When? — when I am master. Come and say good-evening to Josephine. Come, Bourrienne, and dine with us; and be careful what you say, both of you, for Moreau is coming to dinner. I shall keep that dagger as a curiosity.”

He left the room, followed by Roland, who was soon after followed by Bourrienne. On the staircase they met the orderly who had taken the note to Gohier.

“Well?” said the general.

“Here is the president’s answer.”

Bonaparte broke the seal and read: —

The president Gohier is enchanted at the prospect held out to him by General Bonaparte. He will expect him to dinner the day after to-morrow, the 18th Brumaire, with his charming wife and his aide-de-camp, whoever he may be. Dinner will be served at five o’clock.

If that hour does not suit General Bonaparte will he kindly make known the one he would prefer.

The president,

GOHIER.

16th Brumaire, year VII.

With an indescribable smile Bonaparte put the letter into his pocket. Then, turning to Roland, he said: —

“Do you know president Gohier?”

“No, general.”

“Ah! you will know him; he is an excellent man.”

These words were said in a tone that was no less indescribable than the smile.

XX.

THE GUESTS OF GENERAL BONAPARTE.

JOSEPHINE, in spite of her thirty-four years, possibly because of them (for that period of life when she hovers between her passing youth and her coming age is delightful in a woman), — Josephine, more graceful than ever, was still the charming being whom we have all known. An imprudent remark of Junot had, at the very moment of her husband's return, caused a coolness between them. But three days had sufficed to restore to the enchantress her full power over the conqueror of Rivoli and the Pyramids.

She was doing the honors of her salon when Roland entered the room. Always incapable, like the true creole that she was, of controlling her emotions, she gave a cry of joy and held out her hand to him. She knew his reckless bravery, and she knew, too, that if the young man had a dozen lives he would give them all for Bonaparte. Roland eagerly took the hand she offered him and kissed it with much respect. Josephine had known his mother in Martinique, and whenever she saw the son she never failed to mention his maternal grandfather, M. de la Clémencière, in whose magnificent gardens she used as a child to gather those splendid tropical fruits unknown to our colder climates.

A subject of conversation was, therefore, ready at hand. Josephine asked tenderly after Madame de Montrevel's health and that of her daughter and her little son. Then, these questions asked and answered, she added: —

“My dear Roland, I must now pay attention to my guests; but try to stay after the others, or else let me see

you alone to-morrow. I have something to say to you about *him* (and she glanced at Bonaparte), and a thousand things to tell you." Then, with a sigh, and pressing the young man's hand, she added, "Whatever happens, you will never leave him, will you?"

"Whatever happens! What will happen?" asked Roland.

"I know," said Josephine; "and I am certain that after you have talked ten minutes with Bonaparte you will know too. Meantime, watch and hear, and hold your tongue."

Roland bowed and retired apart, resolved, as Joséphine advised, to play the part of observer.

But what was there to observe? Three principal groups were in the salon. The first gathered around Madame Bonaparte, the only woman present, and this was more a flux and a reflux than a group. The second surrounded Talma, and had in it Arnault, Parseval-Grandmaison, Monge, Berthollet, and two or three other members of the Institute. The third was that in which Bonaparte himself was standing; in it were Talleyrand, Barras, Lucien, Admiral Bruix,¹ Rœderer, Regnaud de Saint-Jean-d'Angely, Fouché, Réal, and two or three generals, among whom was Lefebvre.

In the first group they talked fashions, music, theatre; in the second, literature, sciences, dramatic art; in the third, of everything except that of which they were all thinking. No doubt this reserve was not in keeping with Bonaparte's own feeling at the moment; for after sharing for a short time in the commonplace conversation that went on, he suddenly took the arm of the ex-bishop of Autun, and led him into the embrasure of a window.

"Well?" he said, interrogatively.

¹ Not to be confounded with Rear-Admiral De Brueys, who was killed at Aboukir, August 1, 1798. Admiral Bruix, the negotiator with Talleyrand of the 18th Brumaire, did not die till 1805.

Talleyrand looked at Bonaparte with that air which belonged to none but him, and said:—

“What did I tell you of Sieyès, general?”

“You advised me to get the support of those who regard the friends of the Republic as Jacobins, and to rely upon it that Sieyès was at their head.”

“I was not mistaken.”

“Will he yield?”

“Better still; he has yielded.”

“The man who wanted to shoot me at Fréjus, for having landed without performing quarantine!”

“Oh, no; not for that.”

“For what, then?”

“For not having looked at him or spoken to him at a dinner given by Gohier.”

“To tell you the truth, that was intentional; I cannot endure that unfrocked monk.”

Bonaparte perceived, a moment too late, that the speech he had just made was like the sword of the archangel, two-edged; if Sieyès was unfrocked, Talleyrand was unmitred. He gave a rapid glance at the face of his companion; but the ex-bishop was smiling his softest smile.

“Then I can count upon Sieyès, can I?” said Bonaparte.

“I will answer for him.”

“And Cambacérès and Lebrun, — have you seen them?”

“I took Sieyès in hand as the most recalcitrant; Bruix took the two others.”

The admiral, though still in the midst of the group, was carefully observing the general and the diplomatist; he knew their conversation had a special importance. Bonaparte made him a sign to join them. A less able man would have done so at once; Bruix made no such mistake. He walked about the room for a time, and then, as if he had just perceived Talleyrand and Bonaparte talking together, he went up to them.

“Bruix is an uncommonly able man,” said Bonaparte, who judged men as much by little things as by great ones.

"And above all very cautious, general," said Talleyrand.

"Yes; but we shall need a corkscrew to pull anything out of him."

"Oh, no; he will talk frankly enough now, and face the question."

Talleyrand was right. Bruix had no sooner joined them than he said, in words as plain as they were concise:—

"I have seen them; they waver."

"They waver! Cambacérés and Lebrun waver! Lebrun I can understand, — a sort of man of letters, a moderate, a puritan; but Cambacérés —"

"It is as I tell you."

"Did not you hold out to them the idea that I intended to make each of them a consul?"

"I did not get as far as that," replied Bruix, laughing.

"Why not?" asked Bonaparte.

"Because this is the first word you have said about any such intention, citizen general."

"True," said Bonaparte, biting his lips.

"Am I to repair the omission?" asked Bruix.

"No, no," exclaimed Bonaparte, hastily; "they would think I was in need of them. I won't have any evasions. They must decide to-day, without other conditions than those you have offered to them; to-morrow it will be too late. I feel myself strong enough to stand alone; and I now have Sieyès and Barras."

"Barras?" repeated the other two men, astonished.

"Yes, Barras, who treated me as a little corporal, and said he would n't send me back to Italy because I had made my fortune there, and it was useless to return. Well, Barras —" He stopped.

"Barras?"

"Oh, nothing." Then, changing his mind, "Faith! I may as well tell you all. What do you suppose Barras said at a dinner yesterday in my presence? That it was impossible to go on any longer under such a constitution as that of the year III. He admitted the necessity of a

dictatorship, said he meant to retire and throw up the reins of government, adding that he himself was looked upon as worn-out, and the Republic needed new men. Guess on whom he thinks of laying off his power. I'll give it you, as Madame de Sévigné says, in a hundred, thousand, ten thousand! No other than General Hédouville, a worthy man enough, but I have only to look him in the face to make him lower his eyes, — my glance must be blasting! It results that this morning Barras came to my bedside and excused himself as best he could for the nonsense he talked the night before, and declared that I alone could save the Republic, and that he had come to place himself at my disposal, to do what I wished, and to take any position I might assign to him, begging me to promise that if I had any plan in my head I would count on him, — yes on him, — and he would be true to me till doomsday."

"And yet," said Talleyrand, unable to resist a play of words, "doomsday is not a name to conjure liberty with."

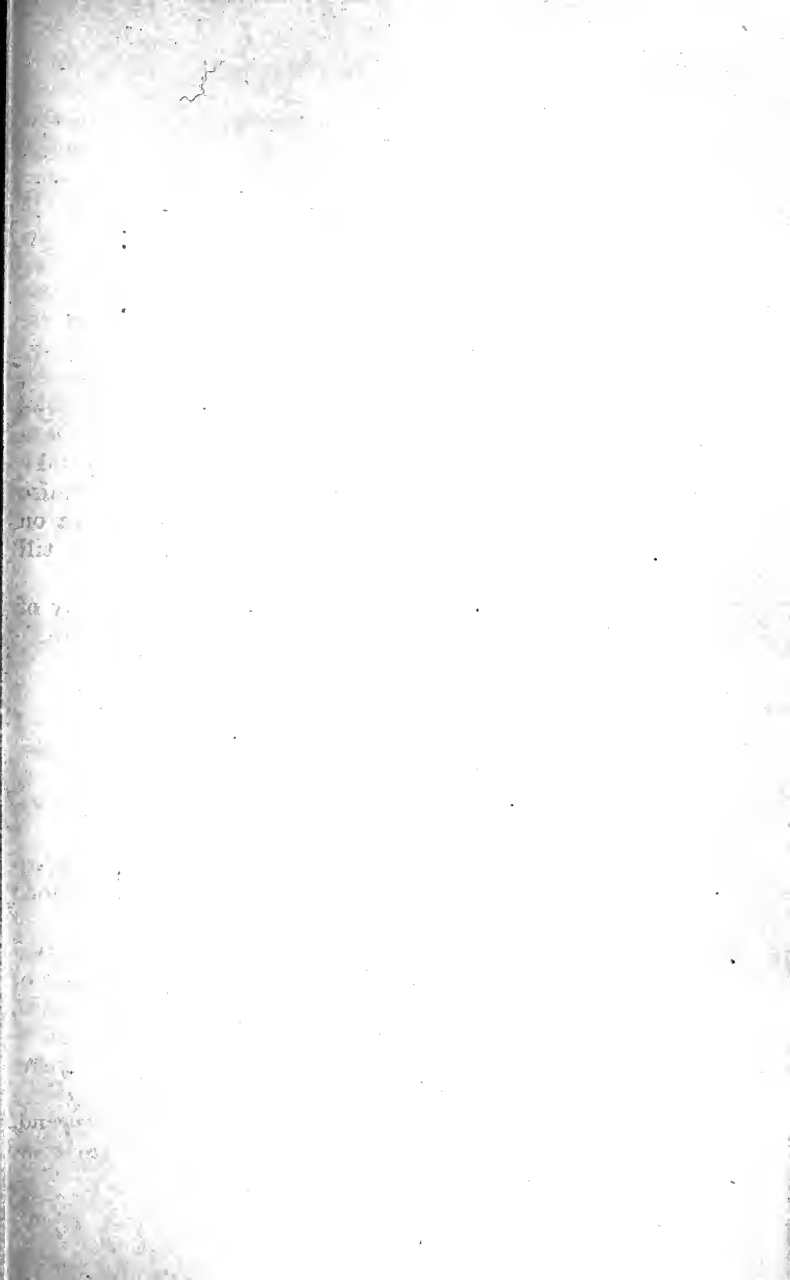
Bonaparte glanced at the ex-bishop.

"Yes," he said, "I know that Barras is your friend, and the friend of Fouché and Réal; but he is not mine and I shall prove it to him. Go back to Lebrun and Cambacérès, Bruix, and let them make or break their bargain as they choose." Then looking at his watch and frowning, he added, "It seems to me that Moreau keeps me waiting."

So saying, he turned away and went toward the group that surrounded Talma. The two diplomatists watched him. Then the admiral said in a low voice: —

"What do you think, my dear Maurice, of such gratitude toward the man who picked him out at the siege of Toulon, when he was nothing but a lieutenant, who trusted him to defend the Convention on the 13th Vendémiaire, and appointed him, when only twenty-six years old, to command the Army of Italy?"

"I think, my dear admiral," replied M. de Talleyrand, with his pallid, mocking smile, "that there are some





PORTRAIT OF MOREAU.

services so great that they can be paid for only by ingratitude."

Just then the door opened, and General Moreau was announced. At this announcement, which was more than a piece of news, — it was a great surprise to most of those who were present, — every eye was turned on the door.

Moreau appeared. At this particular period three men were in the eyes of France. Moreau was one of them. The two others were Bonaparte and Pichegru. Each had become a sort of symbol. Pichegru, since the 18th Fructidor, was the symbol of monarchy; Moreau, ever since he had been christened Fabius, was the symbol of the Republic; Bonaparte, symbol of war, towered over them both by the adventurous aspect of his genius.

Moreau was then in the full strength of his age, — we might say the full strength of his genius, if one of the characteristics of genius were not decision. Now, no one was ever more undecided than the famous cunctator. He was then thirty-six years of age, tall, with a sweet, calm, firm countenance that must have resembled that of Xenophon.

Bonaparte had never seen him, and he had never seen Bonaparte. While the one was fighting on the Adige and the Mincio, the other was fighting on the Danube and the Rhine.

When Bonaparte now caught sight of him he went toward him.

"Welcome, general!" he said.

Moreau smiled with extreme courtesy.

"General," he answered, while all present made a circle round them to see how the new Cæsar would meet the new Pompey, "you come victorious from Egypt, while I have come defeated from Italy."

"A defeat which was not yours, and for which you are not responsible, general. It was Joubert's fault. If he had gone to the Army of Italy as soon as he was made its commander-in-chief, it is more than probable that the

Russians and Austrians, with the troops they then had, could not have resisted him. But he stayed in Paris for his honeymoon, and that fatal month, which the poor fellow paid for with his life, gave the enemy time to gather up their reinforcements. The surrender of Mantua alone gave them fifteen thousand men the night before the battle. It was impossible that our brave army should not be overwhelmed by such united forces."

"Alas! yes," said Moreau; "it is always the greater number that conquers the smaller."

"A great truth, general!" cried Bonaparte; "an indisputable truth."

"And yet," said Arnault, joining in the conversation, "you have yourself, general, beaten great armies with little armies."

"If you were Marius, instead of being the author of 'Marius' you would not have said that, my dear poet. Even when I beat great armies with little armies — now listen to this, you young men, who obey to-day and will command to-morrow — it was always the great armies who conquered the little armies."

"I don't understand," said Arnault and Lefebvre together.

But Moreau made a sign with his head to say that he understood it. Bonaparte continued:—

"Follow my theory; for it contains the whole art of war. When with lesser forces I am in presence of a great army, I gather mine together with great rapidity and fall like a thunderbolt on a wing of the great army and overthrow it; then I profit by the disorder into which this manœuvre never fails to throw the enemy's forces to attack them on the other side, again with my whole army. I thus fight in detail, and the victories which have always resulted are, as you see, the triumph of the many over the few."

As the great general was concluding his definition of his own genius the door opened and a servant announced that dinner was served.

“General,” said Bonaparte, leading Moreau to Josephine, “take in my wife. Gentlemen, follow them.”

On this invitation all present moved from the salon to the dining-room.

After dinner, on pretence of showing him a magnificent sabre he had brought from Egypt, Bonaparte took Moreau into his study. There the rivals remained a full hour, shut up together. What passed between them? What compact was signed? What promises were made? No one has ever known. Only, when Bonaparte returned alone to the salon and Lucien asked him, “Well, what of Moreau?” he answered:—

“Just as I foresaw; prefers military power to political power. I have promised him the command of an army.” Bonaparte smiled as he uttered the last words. “Meantime —” he added.

“Meantime?” asked Lucien.

“He will have that of the Luxembourg. I am not sorry to make him the jailer of the Directors before I make him the conqueror of the Austrians.”

The next day the following appeared in the “*Moniteur* :”

PARIS, 17th Brumaire. Bonaparte has presented to Moreau a Damascus sword set with precious stones, which he brought from Egypt, the value of which is estimated at twelve thousand francs.

XXI.

THE SCHEDULE OF THE DIRECTORY.

WE have said that Moreau, furnished no doubt with instructions, left the little house in the rue de la Victoire, while Bonaparte returned alone to the salon. Everything was noted and commented upon in such a company as was there assembled; the absence of Moreau, the return alone of Bonaparte, and the visible good humor which animated his face, were all observed.

The eyes that fastened upon him most eagerly were those of Roland and Josephine. Moreau *for* Bonaparte added twenty chances to the success of the plot; Moreau *against* Bonaparte took away fifty. Josephine's eyes were so supplicating that as he left Lucien Bonaparte pushed his brother toward his wife. Lucien understood his meaning and went up to Josephine.

"All is well," he said.

"Moreau?"

"With us."

"I thought him too republican."

"He has been made to see that all is for the good of the Republic."

"I thought him too ambitious," said Roland.

Lucien started and looked at the young man.

"That's the right idea of him."

"Then," said Josephine, "if he is so ambitious he will not let Bonaparte seize the power."

"Why not?"

"Because he will want it for himself."

"Yes; but he will wait to get it ready-made, inasmuch as he can't create it, and is afraid to seize it."

During this time Bonaparte joined the group which had formed, after dinner as well as before it, around Talma; remarkable men are always a centre of attraction.

“What are you relating, Talma?” asked Bonaparte. “They seem to be listening to you with great attention.”

“Yes, but my reign is over,” said the actor.

“How is that?”

“I do as the citizen Barras has done; I abdicate.”

“Has the citizen Barras abdicated?”

“So they say.”

“Is it known who takes his place?”

“It is surmised.”

“Is it one of your friends, Talma?”

“Time was,” said Talma bowing, “when he did me the honor of saying that I was his.”

“Well, in that case, I shall ask for your influence.”

“Granted,” said Talma, laughing; “it only remains to ask how it can serve you.”

“Get me sent back to Italy; Barras would not let me go.”

“Ha!” said Talma. “Don’t you remember the old song, general, — ‘Why go to the woods when the laurels are clipped’?”

“Oh Roscius, Roscius! have you grown a flatterer in my absence?”

“Roscius was the friend of Cæsar, general, and when the conqueror returned from Gaul he probably said to him just what I have said to you.”

Bonaparte laid his hand on Talma’s shoulder.

“Would he have said the same words after the crossing of the Rubicon?”

Talma looked Bonaparte straight in the face.

“No,” he replied. “He would have said to him, like the augur, ‘Beware the ides of March.’”

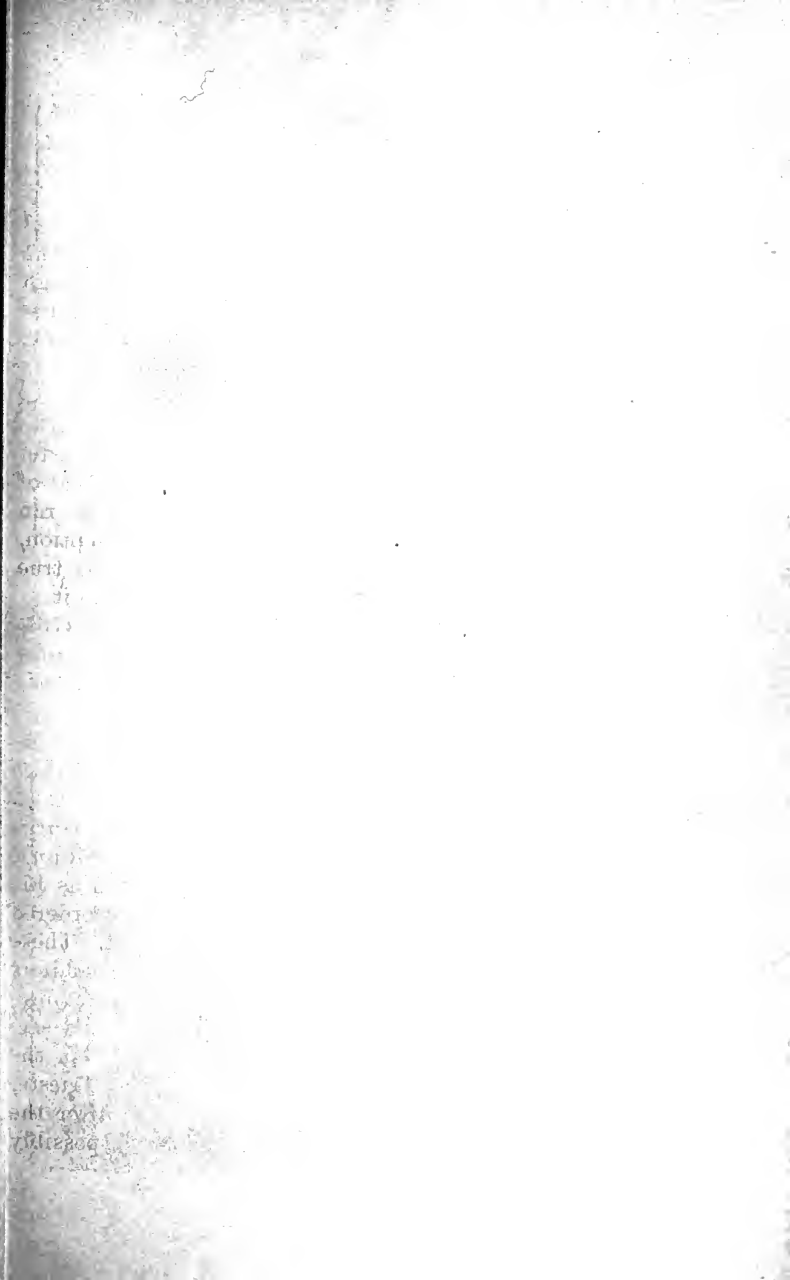
Bonaparte slipped his hand into his breast as if in search of something; finding the dagger of the Jehu Brethren he grasped it convulsively. Had he a presentiment of the conspiracies of Aréna, of Saint-Régent, of Cadoudal?

Just then the door opened and a servant announced: "General Bernadotte."

"Bernadotte!" muttered Bonaparte. "What does he want here?"

Since Bonaparte's return from Egypt Bernadotte had held aloof from him, refusing all the advances which the commander-in-chief had made to him, directly or through his friends. The fact is that Bernadotte had long discerned the politician beneath the great-coat of the soldier; the dictator beneath the general; for Bernadotte, king as he afterwards allowed himself to be made, was a very different Republican from Moreau. Besides, Bernadotte considered that he had reason to complain of Bonaparte. His military career had not been less brilliant than that of the young general; his fortunes were destined to run parallel to the latter's to the end, — with this exception, that Bernadotte was to die upon his throne. It is true that he did not conquer that throne; he was called to it.

The son of a lawyer at Pau, Bernadotte, born in 1765, that is to say five years before Bonaparte, was in the ranks as a private soldier when only seventeen. In 1789 he was only a sergeant-major. But those were the days of rapid promotion. In 1794 Kléber announced him brigadier-general on the battle-field, where in fact, Bernadotte had decided the fortunes of the day. Becoming general of division he took a brilliant part in the affairs at Fleurus and at Juliers, forced Maestricht to capitulate, took Altdorf, and protected against an army twice as numerous as his own, the retreat of Joubert. In 1797 the Directory ordered him to take seventeen thousand men to Bonaparte. These seventeen thousand men were his veterans, the old soldiers of Kléber, Marceau, and Hoche, the soldiers of the Sambre-et-Meuse; and yet Bernadotte forgot all rivalry and seconded Bonaparte with all his might; taking part in the passage of the Tagliamento, capturing Gradiska, Trieste, Laybach, Idria; bringing back to the Directory, after the campaign, the flags of the enemy, and accepting, possibly





PORTRAIT OF BERNADOTTE.

with reluctance, the embassy to Vienna, while Bonaparte was made commander-in-chief of the army of Egypt.

At Vienna a riot excited by the tricolor flag hoisted above the embassy, for which the ambassador was unable to obtain redress, forced him to demand his passports. On his return to Paris, he was made minister of war by the Directory. An underhand proceeding of Sieyès, who was annoyed by Bernadotte's republicanism, induced the latter to resign his post. The resignation was accepted, and at the time when Bonaparte landed at Fréjus the late war minister had been three months out of office. Since Bonaparte's return several of Bernadotte's friends had endeavored to bring about his reinstatement, but Bonaparte was opposed to it; this became known to Bernadotte and the result was an hostility between the two generals, none the less real because not openly avowed.

Bernadotte's appearance in Bonaparte's house was therefore an event almost as extraordinary as the presence of Moreau. And the entrance of the conqueror of Maestricht caused as many heads to turn as the entrance of the conqueror of Rastadt. But instead of going forward to meet him as he had met Moreau, Bonaparte merely turned round and awaited the new-comer.

Bernadotte from the threshold of the door, cast a rapid glance around the room; he distinguished and analyzed the groups, and though he must have seen Bonaparte in the midst of the chief one, he went up to Josephine, who was reclining on a low couch at the corner of the fireplace, beautiful as ever and draped like the statue of Agrippina in the Pitti, and addressing her with chivalric courtesy inquired for her health; after which, he raised his head for the first time as if to look for Bonaparte. Everything was of such vital significance at this moment that all present took notice of this by-play.

Bonaparte with his rapid, comprehending intellect, was not the last to notice the same thing; he was seized with impatience, and instead of awaiting Bernadotte any longer

in the midst of the group where he happened to be, he turned abruptly to the embrasure of a window as if to challenge the ex-minister of war to follow him. Bernadotte bowed graciously to right and left, and, controlling his usually mobile face into an expression of perfect calmness, he walked towards Bonaparte, who awaited him as a wrestler awaits his antagonist, the right foot forward, the lips tightened. The two men bowed to each other; but Bonaparte made no movement to extend his hand to Bernadotte; and Bernadotte made none to take it.

"Is it you?" said Bonaparte. "I am glad to see you."

"Thank you, general," replied Bernadotte. "I have come because I wished to give you certain explanations."

"I did not recognize you at first."

"Yet I think, general, that my name was announced by your servant in a voice loud enough to prevent any doubt as to my identity."

"Yes, but he announced General Bernadotte."

"Well?"

"Well, I saw a man in citizen's dress and though I recognized you I doubted if it was really you."

For some time past Bernadotte had affected the wearing of civilian clothes in preference to his uniform.

"You know," he said, laughing; "I am now only half a soldier. I was retired by citizen Sieyès."

"It seems that it was rather lucky for me when I landed at Fréjus that you were no longer minister of war."

"Why so?"

"You said, so I am told, that if you had received the order to arrest me for violating quarantine you would have executed it."

"I did say it and I repeat it, general. I have always been a faithful observer of discipline. As a minister I was a slave to law."

Bonaparte bit his lips.

"And will you say, after that, that you have not a personal enmity to me?"

“A personal enmity to you, general?” replied Bernadotte. “Why should I have it? We have always gone together, almost in the same stride; I was even made general before you. My campaigns on the Rhine, though they were less brilliant than yours on the Adige, were not less useful to the Republic; and when I had the honor to serve under your orders in Italy you found me, I hope, a subordinate devoted, if not to the man, at least to the country which he served. It is true that since your departure, general, I have been more fortunate than you in not having had the responsibility of a great army, like yours in Egypt, which, if we are to believe Kléber’s last despatches, you have left in a disastrous position.”

“Kléber’s last despatches! What do you mean? Has Kléber written?”

“Are you ignorant of it, general? Has the Directory not informed you of the complaints of your successor? If not, it is a great weakness on their part; and I am doubly glad to have come here, not only to correct in your mind what has been said of me, but to tell you what is being said of you.”

Bonaparte fixed an eye as darkling as that of an eagle on Bernadotte.

“And what are they saying of me?” he asked.

“They say that if you must come back you ought to have brought the army with you.”

“Had I a fleet? You forgot that Brueys allowed his to be burned.”

“They also say, general, that if you could not bring back your army it would have been better had you remained with it.”

“That is what I should have done, monsieur, if events had not recalled me to France.”

“What events, general?”

“Your defeats.”

“Pardon me, general, you mean Schérer’s defeats.”

“Yours as well.”

“I was not responsible for the generals who commanded our armies of the Rhine and of Italy until I was minister of war. If you will enumerate the defeats and victories after that time, general, you will see on which side the scale will turn.”

“You certainly do not intend to tell me that matters are in a good state?”

“No; but I do tell you that they are not in so desperate a state as you are affecting to believe — ”

“I, affecting to believe! Really, general, to hear you one would suppose I had some interest in lowering France in the eyes of foreigners.”

“I don’t say that; I say that I wish to settle with you the balance of our victories and defeats for the last few months; and as I came for that, and am now in your house, and in the position of an accused person — ”

“Or of an accuser.”

“An accused person in the first instance — I begin.”

“And I listen,” said Bonaparte, visibly on thorns.

“My ministry dates from the 30th Prairial, the 8th of June if you prefer it; we will not quarrel about words.”

“Which means that we are to quarrel about things.”

Bernadotte went on without replying: —

“I became minister of war on the 8th of June; that is to say, a few days after the raising of the siege of Saint-Jean-d’Acre.”

Bonaparte bit his lips.

“I did not raise the siege until after I had ruined the fortifications,” he said.

“That is not what Kléber wrote — but the affair does not concern me.” Then he added, smiling: “It happened while Clark was minister.”

There was a moment’s silence, during which Bonaparte endeavored to force Bernadotte to lower his eyes; not succeeding, he said: —

“Go on.”

Bernadotte bowed and continued: —

“Perhaps no minister of war — and the archives of the ministry are there to refer to — ever received the portfolio under more critical circumstances, — civil war within, a foreign enemy at our gates, discouragement in our veteran armies, absolute destitution of means to equip new ones. That was what I had to face on the 8th of June. From that date an active correspondence kept up by me with the civil and military authorities revived their courage and their hopes. My addresses to the armies (this may have been a mistake) were not those of a minister to soldiers, they were those of a comrade to comrades; just as my addresses to the various administrators were those of a citizen to his fellow-citizens. I appealed to the courage of the armies and to the hearts of Frenchmen; I obtained all that I asked. The National Guard reorganized itself with renewed zeal; legions were formed upon the Rhine, on the Mosel. Battalions of veterans took the place of old regiments to reinforce the troops that were guarding our frontier; to-day our cavalry is recruited by a remount of forty thousand horses, and one hundred thousand conscripts have received with cries of ‘Vive la République!’ the flags under which they will fight and conquer —”

“But,” interrupted Bonaparte, sarcastically, “it seems to me that you are making an apology for yourself.”

“Be it so. I shall divide my discourse into two parts. The first will be a contestable apology; the second an incontestable array of facts. I will set aside the apology and proceed to facts. June 17 and 18, the battle of the Trebia. Macdonald wished to fight without Moreau; he crossed the Trebia, attacked the enemy, was beaten by him, and retreated to Modena. June 20, battle of Tortona; Moreau defeated the Austrian Bellegarde. July 22, surrender of the citadel of Alexandria to the Austro-Russians. So far the scale turns to defeat. July 30, surrender of Mantua, another check. August 15, battle of Novi; this time it was more than a check, it was defeat; take note of it, general, for it was the last. At the very moment we were

fighting at Novi, Masséna was maintaining his positions at Zug and Lucerne, and strengthening himself on the Aar and on the Rhine; while Lecourbe, on the 14th and 15th of August, took the Saint-Gothard. August 19, battle of Bergen; Brune defeats the Anglo-Russian army, forty thousand strong, and captures the Russian general Hermann. On the 25th, 26th, and 27th of the same month, the battles of Zurich; Masséna defeats the Austro-Russian under Korsakoff. Hotze and three other Austrian generals are taken prisoners. The enemy lost twelve thousand men, a hundred cannon, and all his baggage; the Austrians, separated from the Russians, could not rejoin them until after they were driven beyond the Lake of Constance. That series of victories stopped the progress the enemy had been making since the beginning of the campaign; from the time Zurich was retaken France was secure from invasion. August 30 Molitor defeated the Austrian generals Jellachich and Linken and drove them back into the Grisons. September 1 Molitor attacked and defeated General Rosemberg in the Mutterthal. On the 2d Molitor forced Souvaroff to evacuate Glarus, to abandon his wounded, his cannon, and sixteen hundred prisoners. The 6th, General Brune defeated a second time the Anglo-Russians who were under the command of the Duke of York. On the 7th General Gazan took possession of Constance. On the 8th you landed near Fréjus. Well, general," continued Bernadotte, "as France is probably about to pass into your hands, it is well that you should know the exact state in which you take her. What we are now doing, general, is history; and it is important that those who may have an interest in some day falsifying history shall find upon their path the denial of Bernadotte."

"Is that said for my benefit, general?"

"I say that for flatterers. You have pretended, so it is said, that you were forced to return because our armies were destroyed, because France was in danger, the Repub-

lie at bay. You may perhaps have left Egypt under that impression; but all such fears must have given way to a totally different belief after you reached France."

"I ask no better than to believe as you do, general," answered Bonaparte, with dignity. "And the more grand and powerful you prove France to be, the more grateful am I to those who have secured her grandeur and her power."

"That result is plain, general: three armies defeated, the Russians exterminated, the Austrians beaten and made to fly, twenty thousand prisoners, a hundred pieces of cannon, fifteen flags, all the baggage of the enemy in our power, nine generals taken or killed, Switzerland free, our frontiers safe, the Rhine our limit, — so much for Masséna's contingent and the situation of Helvetia. The Anglo-Russian army twice defeated, utterly discouraged, abandoning its artillery, baggage, munitions of war and commissariat, even to the women and children who came with the British; eight thousand French prisoners, effective men, returned to France; Holland completely evacuated, — so much for Brune's contingent and the situation in Holland. The rear-guard of General Klenau forced to lay down its arms at Villanova; a thousand prisoners and three pieces of cannon fallen into our hands, and the Austrians driven back beyond Bormida; in all, counting the combats at la Stura and Pignerol four thousand prisoners, sixteen cannon, Mondovi, and the occupation of the whole region between the Stura and the Tanaro, — so much for Championnet's contingent and the situation in Italy. Two hundred thousand men under arms, forty thousand mounted cavalry, — that is my contingent, mine, and the situation in France."

"But," asked Bonaparte, with a satirical air, "if you have, as you say, two hundred and forty thousand soldiers under arms what do you want of the fifteen or twenty thousand men I have in Egypt, who are very useful there as colonizers?"

“If I say we want them back, general, it is not for any use we may wish to make of them, but in the fear of some disaster overtaking them.”

“What disaster do you expect to a force commanded by Kléber?”

“Kléber may be killed, general; and behind Kléber who is there? Menou. Kléber and your twenty thousand men are doomed, general.”

“How doomed?”

“Yes, the sultan will send his troops; he controls by land. The English will send their fleet; they control the sea. We, who have neither the land nor the sea, we shall be compelled to take part from here in the evacuation of Egypt and the capitulation of our army.”

“You take a black view of things, general.”

“The future will show which of us two has seen things as they are.”

“What would you have done in my place?”

“I do not know; but I would never have abandoned those whom France entrusted to me, even if I had to bring them back by way of Constantinople. Xenophon on the banks of the Tigris was in a far more desperate situation than you were on the banks of the Nile; but he brought his ten thousand back to Ionia. And those ten thousand were not the children of Athens, not his own fellow-countrymen; they were only mercenaries.”

After Bernadotte had uttered the word “Constantinople” Bonaparte listened no longer; the name seemed to start a new train of ideas in his mind which he followed in solitary thought. He laid his hand on the arm of the astonished Bernadotte, and with fixed eyes, like a man who pursues through space the phantom of a vanished project, he said:—

“Yes, yes! I thought of it. That was why I persisted in taking that hovel of a Saint-Jean-d’Acre. Here you thought it obstinacy, the loss of useless men, the sacrifice to self-love of a third-rate general who fears he shall be

blamed for a defeat. What should I have cared for the raising of the siege of Saint-Jean-d'Acre if Saint-Jean-d'Acre had not been a barrier in the way of the grandest project that was ever conceived? Cities! Hey! good God! I could take as many cities as ever Alexander or Cæsar took; but it was Saint-Jean-d'Acre that it was necessary to take; and if I had taken it do you know what I should have done?"

And his burning eye fixed itself upon Bernadotte, who, this time, lowered his under the flame of genius.

"What I should have done," repeated Bonaparte, — and, like Ajax, he seemed to threaten heaven with his clenched hand, — "if I had taken Saint-Jean-d'Acre I should have found the treasure of the pacha and three hundred thousand stand of arms. With that I should have raised and armed all Syria so maddened by the tyranny of Djezzar that each time I attacked him the populations prayed to God for his overthrow. I should have marched on Damascus and Aleppo. I should have swelled my army with all the malcontents. Advancing into the country I should, step by step, have proclaimed to the peoples the abolition of slavery, the annihilation of the tyrannical government of the pachas. I should have reached Constantinople with those armed masses, and the Turkish empire would have been overthrown. I should have founded there in its place, in Constantinople, a great empire, which would have fixed my place in history higher than Constantine, higher than Mohammed the Second! Perhaps I should even have returned to Paris by Adrianople, or by Vienna, after annihilating that House of Austria. Ah! my dear general, that is the plan the wretched little town of Saint-Jean-d'Acre brought to naught!"

And he so far forgot to whom he was speaking, as he followed the shadows of his vanished dream, that he actually called Bernadotte "my dear general." The latter, almost appalled by the grandeur of the project Bonaparte had just divulged to him, made a step backward.

“Yes,” he said, “I see what you want; you have betrayed yourself. East or West, a throne! A throne? so be it! Why not? Count upon me to help you conquer it, — but elsewhere than in France. I am a republican, and I will die a republican.”

Bonaparte shook his head as if to shake off the thoughts that held him in the clouds.

“I, too, am a republican,” he said; “but see what has come of your Republic!”

“What matters that?” cried Bernadotte. “It is not to a word nor to a form that I am faithful, but to a principle. Let the Directors give me power, and I shall know how to defend the Republic from its internal enemies as I have defended it from the foreign enemy.”

As he said the words Bernadotte raised his eyes, and his glance encountered that of Bonaparte. Two naked blades clashing together never sent forth a lightning more vivid, more terrible.

For some time past Josephine had watched the interview of the two men with anxious attention. She saw that dual glance teeming with reciprocal menace; she rose hastily and went to Bernadotte.

“General,” she said.

Bernadotte bowed.

“You are intimate with Gohier, are you not?” she continued.

“He is one of my best friends, madame,” said Bernadotte.

“Well, we dine with him the day after to-morrow, the 18th Brumaire; dine there yourself and bring Madame Bernadotte, — I should be so glad to know her better.”

“Madame,” said Bernadotte, “in the days of the Greeks you would have been one of the three Graces; in the Middle Ages you would have been a fairy; to-day you are one of the most adorable women whom I know.”

And making three steps backward and bowing, he contrived to take leave politely without including Bonaparte in his bow. Josephine followed him with her eyes until

he had left the room. Then, turning to her husband she said:—

“Well, it was not as successful with Bernadotte as with Moreau, was it?”

“Adventurous, bold, disinterested, sincere in his republicanism, inaccessible to seduction, he is a human obstacle; you may turn round it but you can never overturn it.”

Then, leaving the salon without taking leave of his guests, he went upstairs to his study, followed by Roland and Bourrienne.

They had hardly been there a quarter of an hour when the handle of the lock turned softly, the door opened, and Lucien appeared.

XXII.

THE SKETCH OF A DECREE.

LUCIEN was evidently expected. Not once had Bonaparte mentioned his name since entering the study; but, in spite of this silence, he had turned his head three or four times with increasing impatience to the door, and when the young man appeared an exclamation of contentment escaped his lips.

Lucien Bonaparte, the general's youngest brother, was born in 1775, which made him now barely twenty-five years old. Since 1797, that is, from the age of twenty-two and a half, he had been a member of the Council of the Five Hundred, who, to do honor to the commander-in-chief, had made him their president. With the projects that were now in his mind nothing could have been more fortunate for Bonaparte.

Frank and loyal, republican to the core, Lucien in seconding his brother's projects believed that he was doing even better service to the Republic than to the future First Consul. To his mind, no one could save it a second time so well as he who had saved it once. It was with such feelings in his heart that he now came to talk with his brother.

"Here you are!" said Bonaparte. "I have been waiting for you impatiently."

"I thought so; but I had to wait till no one would notice my departure."

"Did you manage it?"

"Yes; Talma was telling a story about Marat and Dumouriez. Interesting as it was I deprived myself of the pleasure of hearing it and slipped off."

“I have just heard a carriage driving away; the person who got into it could n’t have seen you coming up my private stairs, could he?”

“The person who drove off was I myself; the carriage was mine. If that is not seen in the courtyard everybody will think me gone.”

Bonaparte breathed freer.

“Well, now let us hear,” he said; “how have you employed your day?”

“I have not wasted my time, you may be sure of that.”

“Are we to have a decree of the Council?”

“It was drawn up to-day and I have brought it to you — the rough draught, I mean — so that you may see if there is anything you want changed or added.”

“Let me see it,” said Bonaparte. Then, taking the paper hastily from Lucien’s hand he began to read: —

ART. I. The Legislative body is transferred to the commune of Saint-Cloud; the two branches of the Council will hold their sessions in the two wings of the palace.

“That’s the important article,” said Lucien. “I made them put it first so that it might strike the minds of the people at once.”

“Yes, yes,” said Bonaparte, and he continued: —

ART. II. They will assemble there to-morrow, 20th Brumaire.

“No, no,” said Bonaparte, to-morrow, 19th. “Change the date, Bourrienne;” and he passed the paper to his secretary.

“Are you sure you will be ready for the 18th?”

“Sure. Fouché said to me yesterday: ‘Make haste, or I won’t answer for the result.’”

“19th Brumaire,” quoted Bourrienne, returning the paper to the general. Bonaparte resumed: —

ART. II. They will assemble there to-morrow, 19th Brumaire, at mid-day. All deliberations are forbidden elsewhere and before the above date.

Bonaparte read that article over twice.

“It will do,” he said. “There is no double meaning there,” and he continued:—

ART. III. General Bonaparte is charged with the enforcement of this decree; he will take all necessary measures for the safety of the National legislature.

A satirical smile flickered on the stony lips of the reader; then, almost immediately, he went on:—

The general commanding the 17th military division, the guard of the Legislature, the stationary national guard, the troops of the line within the boundaries of the commune of Paris, and those in the constitutional arrondissement, and throughout the limits of the said 17th division, are placed directly under his orders, and are directed to regard him as their commanding officer.

“Bourrienne, add: ‘All citizens will render him assistance when called upon.’ The bourgeois love to meddle in political matters, and when they really can help a plan it would be a pity not to give them the satisfaction.”

Bourrienne obeyed. Then he returned the paper to the general, who went on:—

ART. IV. General Bonaparte is summoned before the Council to receive a copy of the present decree and to make oath thereto. He will consult with the inspecting commissioners of both branches of the Council.

ART. V. The present decree shall be transmitted immediately by messenger, to all members of the Council of the Five Hundred and to the Executive Directory. It shall be printed and posted, and promulgated throughout the communes of the Republic by special messengers.

Done at Paris, this . . .

“The date is left blank,” said Lucien.

“Put ‘18th Brumaire,’ Bourrienne; the decree must take everybody by surprise. It must be issued at seven o’clock

in the morning and at the same hour, or even a trifle earlier, it must be posted on all the walls of Paris."

"But suppose the Ancients won't consent to issue it?" said Lucien.

"All the more reason for posting it, ninny," replied Bonaparte. "We must act as if it were issued."

"Am I to correct a fault in grammar I see in that last paragraph?" asked Bourrienne, laughing.

"Where?" demanded Lucien, in the tone of an aggrieved author.

"The word 'immediate'" replied Bourrienne. "You can't say 'transmitted immediate;' it ought to be 'immediately.'"

"Oh, never mind," said Bonaparte, "I shall act immediately; you may trust me for that." Then, after a moment's reflection, he added: "As to what you said just now about their not being willing to pass the decree, there's a very simple way to get it passed."

"What is that?"

"Convoke all the members we are sure of at six o'clock in the morning, and at eight o'clock all those of whom we are not sure. The best men are with us; it will be devilishly hard to make us lose the majority."

"But six o'clock for some and eight for the others —" said Lucien doubtfully.

"Employ two secretaries; one of them can make a mistake." Then turning to Bourrienne he said, "Write this:"

And walking up and down the room he dictated without the slightest hesitation, like a man who had long thought over and prepared what he dictated, the following proclamation; stopping every now and then beside Bourrienne to see if the secretary's pen were following his every word: —

CITIZENS! — The Council of the Ancients, the trustee of the Nation's wisdom, has issued the subjoined decree: it is authorized by articles 102 and 103 of the Constitution.

This decree enjoins me to take measures for the safety of the National Legislature, and its necessary and momentary removal.

Bourrienne looked at Bonaparte; *instantaneous* was the word he meant to use, but as he did not correct himself Bourrienne allowed the word *momentary* to stand. Bonaparte continued to dictate: —

The Legislature will find means to avoid the imminent danger into which the disorganization of all parts of the administration has brought us.

But it needs, at this crisis, the united support and confidence of patriots. Rally around it; it offers the only means of establishing the Republic on the bases of civil liberty, internal prosperity, victory, and peace.

Bonaparte read the proclamation through, and nodded his head in sign of approval. Then he looked at his watch.

“Eleven o’clock,” he said; “there is still time.”

Taking Bourrienne’s place he wrote a few words in the form of a note, sealed it, and put the address: “To the citizen Barras.”

“Roland,” he said, when that was done, “take a horse out of the stable, or a carriage in the streets, and go to Barras’s house. I have asked him for an interview at twelve o’clock to-morrow night. I want an answer.”

Roland left the room. A moment later the gallop of a horse was heard disappearing in the direction of the rue du Mont-Blanc.

“Now, Bourrienne,” said Bonaparte, after listening to the sound, “to-morrow, at midnight, whether I am in the house or not in it, you will take my carriage and go in my stead to Barras.”

“In your stead, general?”

“Yes. He will do nothing all day because he will expect me at night to accept him on my side. You will keep my appointment at midnight and tell him that I have such a bad headache I have had to go to bed, but

that I will certainly be with him at seven in the morning. He will believe you, or he won't believe you; but, in any case, it will be too late for him to act against us. By seven in the morning I shall have ten thousand men under my command."

"Very good, general. Have you any other orders to give me?"

"No, not to-night," replied Bonaparte. "Be here to-morrow early."

"And I?" asked Lucien.

"See Sieyès, — he has the Ancients in the hollow of his hand; take measures with him. I don't want him to be seen in my house, nor myself in his; for if by chance we fail, he is a man to repudiate. After to-morrow I intend to be master of my own actions and to have no ties to any one."

"Shall you want me to-morrow?"

"Come here at night and report what happens."

"Are you going back into the salon?"

"No; I shall wait for Josephine in her room. Bourrienne, tell her so as you pass through, so that she may get rid of the people as soon as possible."

Then, saluting his brother and Bourrienne with the same wave of his hand, he took a private passage which led from his study to Josephine's bedroom. There, lighted by a single alabaster lamp which made the face of the conspirator seem paler than ever, Bonaparte listened to the noise of the carriages as they one by one left the house. At last the sounds ceased, and five minutes later Josephine entered the room.

She was alone, and held a candlestick of two branches in her hand. Her face, lighted by the double flame, expressed the deepest anxiety.

"Well," asked Bonaparte, "what is the matter?"

"I am frightened," she said.

"Frightened at what, — those fools of Directors, or the lawyers of the two Councils? Nonsense! I have

Sieyès with me in the Ancients; and Lucien in the Five Hundred."

"Then all goes well?"

"Wonderfully well."

"You sent for me, and I took it into my head it was to tell me bad news."

"Pooh! if I had bad news do you suppose I should tell it to you?"

"How comforting that is!"

"Well, don't be uneasy; I have nothing but good news — but I have given you a part in the conspiracy."

"What part?"

"Sit down there and write to Gohier."

"What, — that we can't dine with him?"

"Just the reverse. But I want him and his wife to come and breakfast with us; between those who like each other there can't be too much intercourse."

Josephine sat down at a little rosewood writing-table.

"Dictate," she said. "I will write."

"Bah!" he exclaimed, "so that they may recognize my style! Nonsense, you know a great deal better than I do how to write one of those charming notes there is no resisting."

Josephine smiled at the compliment, and turned her forehead to Bonaparte who kissed it lovingly; then she wrote the following note, which we copy from the original: —

To the citizen Gohier, President of the Executive Directory of the French Republic:

"Is that the way to begin?" she said.

"Exactly; as he won't keep the title long we ought not deprive him of it for the short time left."

"Don't you mean to make him something?"

"I'll make him anything he pleases if he does exactly what I want. Now go on, my dear."

Josephine resumed her pen and wrote as follows:—

Pray come, my dear Gohier, with your wife, and breakfast with me to-morrow at eight o'clock. Don't fail, for I have some very interesting things I want to talk of with you. Adieu. With the sincerest friendship,

Yours,

LA PAGERIE-BONAPARTE.

"I said *to-morrow*," remarked Josephine. "Ought I to date the note 17th Brumaire?"

"You won't be wrong," said Bonaparte, "for there's midnight striking."

In fact, another day had fallen into the gulf of time; the clock struck twelve strokes. Bonaparte listened to them gravely and dreamily. Twenty-four hours only separated him from the solemn day for which he had been scheming a month and of which he had dreamed for years.

Let us do now what he would gladly have done then, and spring across those intervening hours to the day which history has not yet judged, and see what happened in various parts of Paris where the events we are about to relate produced an overwhelming impression.

XXIII.

ALEA JACTA EST.

AT seven in the morning Fouché, minister of police entered the bedroom of Gohier, president of the Directory.

“Oh, ho!” said Gohier, when he saw him. “What has happened now, monsieur le ministre, to give me the pleasure of seeing you at this early hour?”

“Then you don’t yet know about the decree?” said Fouché.

“Decree? No, what decree?” said the worthy Gohier.

“The decree of the Council of Ancients.”

“When did they issue it?”

“Last night.”

“Does the Council meet at night?”

“When matters are urgent, yes.”

“What does the decree say?”

“It transfers the legislative sessions to Saint-Cloud.”

Gohier felt the blow; he saw the advantage which Bonaparte’s daring genius would obtain by this isolation.

“Since when is the minister of police transformed into a messenger of the Ancients?” he asked.

“You are mistaken, citizen president,” replied the ex-Conventional. “I am more the minister of police than ever this morning, for I have come to inform you of an act which may have the most serious consequences.”

Not being as yet sure of how the conspiracy of the rue de la Victoire would turn out, Fouché was not averse to keeping a door open for retreat to the Luxembourg. But Gohier, honest as he was, knew the man too well to be his dupe.

“I ought to have been informed of the decree last night, citizen minister, instead of this morning,” he said, “for in making the communication at this hour you are scarcely in advance of the official notice I shall probably receive in a few moments.”

As he spoke, an usher opened the door and informed the president that a messenger from the Inspecting Commissioners of the Council of Ancients was there and asked to make him a communication.

“Let him come in,” said Gohier.

The messenger entered and presented a letter to the president, who broke the seal hastily and read as follows :

CITIZEN-PRESIDENT, — The Inspecting Commission hasten to inform you of a decree removing the residence of the Legislative bodies to Saint-Cloud.

The decree will be forwarded to you at once; measures for the public safety are at present occupying our attention.

We invite you to meet with us immediately. You will find the Citizens Sieyès and Ducos already here.

Fraternally,

BARILLON.
FARGUES.
CORNET.

“Very good,” said Gohier to the messenger, dismissing him with a wave of his hand.

The messenger departed. Gohier turned to Fouché.

“Ha!” he said. “The plot is well laid; they inform me of the decree, but they do not send it to me. Happily, you are here to tell the terms of it.”

“But,” said Fouché, “I don’t know them.”

“What! do you mean to say that there has been a session of the Council of Ancients, and you, the minister of police, do not know anything about it?”

“I knew it took place,” said Fouché, “but I was not present.”

“Why did n’t you send a secretary or a stenographer

there who could give you an account of the meeting word for word, when you knew that in all probability that meeting would dispose of the fate of France? Ah! citizen Fouché, you are either the deepest or the shallowest minister of police that the country has ever seen."

"Have you any orders to give me, citizen president?" demanded Fouché.

"None, citizen minister," replied Gohier. "If the Directory thinks proper to give orders it will be to men who are worthy of their confidence. You can return to those who sent you," he added, turning his back upon the minister.

Fouché went out, and Gohier immediately rang his bell. An usher entered.

"Go to citizens Barras, Sieyès, Ducos, and Moulins, and beg them to come here at once. Ah! and ask Madame Gohier to step into my study and bring with her the note Madame Bonaparte wrote her inviting us to breakfast."

Five minutes later Madame Gohier entered, fully dressed, with the note in her hand. The invitation was for eight o'clock, it was then half-past seven, and it would take twenty minutes to drive from the Luxembourg to the rue de la Victoire.

"Here is the note, my dear," said Madame Gohier, giving it to her husband, "it says eight o'clock."

"Yes," said Gohier. "I was not in doubt about the hour, but about the day."

Taking the note from his wife's hand he read it over:

"Pray come, my dear Gohier, with your wife, and breakfast with me to-morrow at eight o'clock. Don't fail, for I have some very interesting things I want to talk of with you."

"Ah!" continued Gohier, "there is no room for doubt."

"Are we not going?" asked Madame Gohier.

"You are going, my dear, but not I. A strange event has occurred, which the citizen Bonaparte probably knows

all about, which will detain my colleagues and myself at the Luxembourg."

"A serious event?"

"Probably serious."

"Then I shall stay here with you."

"No, no, you can't be of any service to me here. Go to Madame Bonaparte; I may be mistaken, but, if anything extraordinary happens which seems to you alarming, let me know in some way or other; any message will do. I shall understand half a word."

"Very good, I will go; the hope of being useful to you is enough."

Just then the messenger who had been sent to the members of the Directory returned.

"General Moulins will be here in a moment," he said. "Citizen Barras is in his bath and will come as soon as he can; citizens Sieyès and Ducos went out early this morning and have not yet returned."

"They are the two traitors!" cried Gohier, "Barras is the dupe." Then, kissing his wife, he said to her, "Now, go."

As she turned to leave the room Madame Gohier came face to face with General Moulins; he — for his character was naturally impetuous — seemed furious.

"Pardon me," he said to Madame Gohier; then rushing to the president he cried —

"Do you know what is going on, president?"

"No, but I suspect something."

"The Legislature is transferred to Saint-Cloud. General Bonaparte is commissioned to carry out the decree, and the troops are placed under his orders."

"Ha! the cat's out of the bag," said Gohier. "Well, we shall have to unite and make a struggle."

"But have n't you heard? Sieyès and Ducos are not in the Luxembourg —"

"By heavens! they are at the Tuileries! But Barras is in his bath, let us go to Barras. The Directory can issue

decrees if there's a majority, and we shall be three. I say again, we must make a struggle."

"Then let us send word to Barras to come here as soon as he is out of his bath."

"No, we had better go to him before he is out of it."

The two Directors left the room and hurried toward Barras's apartments. They found him actually in his bath, but they insisted on entering.

"Well?" said Barras as soon as he saw them.

"Have you heard?"

"I have heard nothing."

They told him what they knew themselves.

"Ah!" said Barras, "that explains everything."

"How do you mean?"

"Yes, that is why he did n't come last night."

"Who?"

"Why, Bonaparte."

"Did you expect him last night?"

"He sent an aide here to say he would call on me at eleven o'clock last night."

"And he did not come?"

"No; he sent Bourrienne in his carriage to say that a violent headache obliged him to go to bed, but he would be here this morning, early."

The Directors looked at each other.

"The whole thing is plain," they said.

"I have sent Bollot, my secretary," continued Barras, "a very intelligent fellow, to find out what he can."

He rang and a servant entered.

"As soon as citizen Bollot returns," said Barras, "ask him to come here."

"He is just getting out of the carriage."

"Tell him to come up at once."

But Bollot was already at the door.

"Well?" cried all the Directors.

"Well, General Bonaparte, in full uniform, accompanied by Generals Beurnonville, Macdonald, and Moreau, are on

their way to the Tuileries, where ten thousand troops are drawn up awaiting them."

"Moreau! Moreau with him!" exclaimed Gohier.

"On his right!"

"I always told you so," cried Moulins, with his military roughness. "Moreau is a sneak, and nothing else."

"Are you still determined to resist, Barras?" said Gohier.

"Yes," replied Barras.

"Then dress yourself, and join us in the council-room."

"Go," said Barras, "I'll follow you."

The two Directors went to their usual council-room. After waiting ten minutes Moulins grew impatient.

"We ought to have stayed with Barras," he said; "for if Moreau is a sneak Barras is a knave."

Two hours later they were still waiting for Barras.

As it happened, Gohier and Moulins were no sooner out of Barras's bath-room than Talleyrand and Bruix entered it; and in talking with them, Barras forgot his appointment.

• We will now see what had happened in the rue de la Victoire.

At seven o'clock, contrary to his usual custom, Bonaparte was up and waiting, in full uniform, in his bedroom. Roland entered. Bonaparte was perfectly calm, — he was on the eve of a battle.

"Has no one come yet, Roland?" he asked.

"No, general," said the young man; "but I heard the roll of a carriage just now."

"So did I," said Bonaparte.

At that moment a servant announced: —

"The citizen Joseph Bonaparte and the citizen General Bernadotte."

Roland questioned Bonaparte with a look, — was he to go or stay? He was to stay. Then he took his stand at the corner of a bookcase, like a sentinel at his post.

"Ah, ha!" exclaimed Bonaparte, seeing that Bernadotte

still wore civilian clothes; "you seem to have a positive horror of the uniform, general."

"And why the devil should I be in uniform at seven o'clock in the morning," retorted Bernadotte, "when I am not in active service?"

"You will be soon."

"I tell you I am retired."

"Yes; but I recall you to active service."

"You?"

"Yes, I."

"In the name of the Directory?"

"Is there still a Directory?"

"Still a Directory! What do you mean?"

"Did you not see, as you came here, the troops who are drawn up in the streets leading to the Tuileries?"

"Yes, I saw them; and I was surprised."

"Those soldiers are mine."

"Pardon me," said Bernadotte; "I thought they belonged to France."

"Ha! to me, or to France; it is all one."

"I was not aware of that," said Bernadotte, coldly.

"Though you doubt it now, you will be certain of it to-night. Come, Bernadotte, this is the vital moment; decide!"

"General," said Bernadotte, "I am fortunate enough to be at this moment a simple citizen; let me remain so."

"Bernadotte, take care; he that is not for me is against me."

"General, pay attention to your words. You say 'Take care.' If that is a threat, you know very well that I fear nothing."

Bonaparte came up to him and took him by both hands. "Yes, I know that," he said; "and that is why I must have you with me. Not only do I value you, Bernadotte, but I love you. I leave you now with Joseph; he is your brother-in-law. Between brethren, damn it, there ought to be no quarrelling."

“And you — where are you going?”

“In your character of Spartan you are a rigid observer of the laws, are you not? Well, here’s a decree issued last night by the Council of the Five Hundred, which confers upon me the immediate command of the troops in Paris. I was right, therefore, in telling you that the soldiers you met were my soldiers, inasmuch as they are under my orders.”

And he put into Bernadotte’s hand the copy of the decree which had been sent to him at six o’clock that morning. Bernadotte read the paper through attentively from the first line to the last.

“To this,” he said, “I have nothing to object. Secure the safety of the National legislature, and all good citizens will be with you.”

“Then be with me now, Bernadotte.”

“Permit me, general, to wait twenty-four hours to see how you fulfil that mandate.”

“Devil of a man!” cried Bonaparte; “have it as you will!”. Then, taking him by the arm, and dragging him a few steps apart from Joseph, he continued, “Bernadotte, I want to play above-board with you.”

“Why so?” said the other; “for I am not on your side.”

“No matter for that. You are overlooking the game; and I want the lookers-on to see that I am not cheating.”

“Do you bind me to secrecy?”

“No.”

“You are right; for if you did, I should have refused to listen to your confidences.”

“Oh, my confidences, they are not long! Your Directory is detested, your Constitution worn-out; you must make a clean sweep of both, and give another direction to the government. You don’t answer me.”

“I was waiting for the rest that you have to say to me.”

“The rest that I have to say to you is, Go and put on your uniform. I cannot wait for you any longer. Join me at the Tuileries among our comrades.”

Bernadotte shook his head.

“You think that you can count on Beurnonville, on Moreau, on Lefebvre,” continued Bonaparte. “Look out of the window. Who is it you see there, — and there? Moreau and Beurnonville. As to Lefebvre, I don’t see him; but I am certain I shall not go a hundred steps before I meet him. Well, will you decide?”

“General,” answered Bernadotte, “I am the last man in the world to be carried away by the force of example, especially bad example. Let Moreau, or Beurnonville, or Lefebvre do as they please; I shall do as I ought.”

“So, then, you positively refuse to accompany me to the Tuileries?”

“I do not wish to take part in a rebellion.”

“A rebellion! a rebellion! And against whom, pray? Against a parcel of imbeciles, who are pettifogging from morning till night in their hovels!”

“Those imbeciles, general, are at this moment the representatives of law. The Constitution protects them; they are sacred to me.”

“At least promise me one thing, iron rod that you are!”

“What is that?”

“To keep quiet.”

“I will keep quiet as citizen; but—”

“But what? Come, I made a clean breast of it to you; do you do likewise.”

“If the Directory gives me an order to act, I shall march against the disturbers, whoever they be.”

“Ah, *ça*! do you think me ambitious?” cried Bonaparte.

Bernadotte smiled. “I suspect it,” he said.

“Upon my word of honor,” said Bonaparte, “you don’t understand me. I have had enough of political turmoil, and what I want is peace. Ah, my dear fellow! Malmaison and fifty thousand francs a year, and I’d willingly resign the rest. You don’t choose to believe me. Well, I invite you to come and see me there three months hence, and if you like pastorals we’ll do one together. Well, au

revoir! I leave you with Joseph; in spite of your refusals, I shall expect you at the Tuileries. Hark! the friends are getting impatient."

Cries of "Vive Bonaparte!" were resounding.

Bernadotte paled slightly. Bonaparte noticed the pallor.

"Ah, ha!" he murmured to himself; "jealous! I was not mistaken. He's an Athenian, not a Spartan."

During the hour that had now elapsed since the decree had been posted up, the salon, the antechambers, and the courtyard had become crowded. The first person whom Bonaparte encountered as he went down the stairway was his Corsican compatriot, Colonel Sébastiani, then commanding the 9th Dragoons.

"Ah! is that you, Sébastiani?" said Bonaparte. "Where are your men?"

"In line along the rue de la Victoire, general."

"Well disposed?"

"Enthusiastic! I have distributed among them ten thousand cartridges, which I had in store."

"Yes; but you had no right to draw those cartridges out without an order from the Commandant of Paris. Do you know that you have burned your ships, Sébastiani?"

"Then take me into yours, general. I have faith in your fortunes."

"Do you think me Cæsar?"

"Faith, I should n't be far wrong if I did. Down below there in the courtyard there are forty or more officers of all arms, without pay, whom the Directory has left for the last year in the utmost penury. They have no hope but in you, general; they are ready to die for you."

"That's right. Go to your regiment and take leave of it."

"Take leave of it!"

"I exchange it for a brigade. Go, go!"

Sébastieniani did not stay to be told twice. Bonaparte

continued his way. At the foot of the staircase he met Lefebvre.

"I am here, general," said Lefebvre.

"You! Well, where is the 17th military division?"

"I am awaiting my appointment to bring it into action."

"Have n't you been appointed?"

"By the Directory, yes; but, as I am not a traitor, I have sent in my resignation, so that they may know I am not to be counted on."

"And you have come here to be appointed by me, so that I may count upon you; is that it?"

"Precisely, general."

"Quick, Roland, a blank commission; fill in the general's name, so that I have only to put my name. I'll sign it on the pommel of my saddle."

"That's the true sort!" said Lefebvre.

"Roland!"

The young man, who had taken a few steps to obey the first order, came back to the general.

"Look on my mantel-shelf," said Bonaparte, in a low voice, "and get a pair of double-barrelled pistols, and bring them at the same time. One never knows what may happen."

"Yes, general," said Roland; "besides, I sha'n't leave you."

"Unless I send you to be killed elsewhere."

"Ah, true!" said the young man, carelessly, as he went off hastily to fulfil his double errand.

Bonaparte was continuing his way when he noticed a shadow in the corridor. He recognized Josephine and ran to her.

"Good God!" she cried; "is there so much danger?"

"What makes you think it?"

"The order I overheard you give to Roland."

"Serves you right for listening at doors! How about Gohier?"

"He did not come."

“Nor his wife?”

“His wife is here.”

Bonaparte put aside his wife with his hand, and entered the salon. He found Madame Gohier alone and very pale.

“What!” said he, without any preamble, “is n’t the president here?”

“It was not possible for him to come, general,” replied Madame Gohier.

Bonaparte repressed an impatient movement.

“He absolutely must come,” he said. “Write to him, madame, and say that I await him here. I will have the letter sent at once.”

“Thank you, general, but my servants are here,” replied Madame Gohier; “they will take it.”

“Write, my dear friend; write at once,” said Josephine, putting pens, ink, and paper before her.

Bonaparte stood so that he could see over her shoulder what she wrote. Madame Gohier looked at him fixedly. He stepped back a pace, bowing to her. She wrote the note, folded it, and looked about her for sealing-wax. It so happened—or was it intentional?—there was no wax, only wafers. She put one on the letter and rang the bell. A servant came.

“Give that to Courtois,” said Madame Gohier, “and tell him to take it instantly to the Luxembourg.”

Bonaparte followed the man with his eyes until the door was closed. Then he said to Madame Gohier:—

“I regret that I cannot breakfast with you; but if the president has business to attend to, so have I. You must breakfast with my wife. Good appetite to both of you!”

And he went out. At the door he met Roland.

“Here’s the commission, general,” said the young man, “and a pen.”

Bonaparte took the pen, and laying the paper on the inside of his aide-de-camp’s hat, he signed the commission. Roland gave him the pistols.

“Did you look to them?” said the general.

Roland smiled. "Don't be uneasy," he said; "I'll answer for them."

Bonaparte passed them through his belt, and as he did so, he muttered, "I wish I knew what she wrote to her husband."

"I can tell you, general," said a voice at his elbow.

"You, Bourrienne!"

"Yes. She wrote, 'You did right not to come; all that is happening here convinces me that the invitation was a trap. I will join you shortly.'"

"Did you unseal the letter?"

"General, Sextus Pompey gave a dinner on his galley to Mark Anthony and Lepidus. His freedman said to him, 'Shall I make you emperor of the world?' 'Can you do it?' 'Easily; I will cut the cable of your galley, and Mark Anthony and Lepidus are prisoners.' 'You should have done it without telling me,' replied Sextus; 'now I charge you, on your life, not to do it.' I remembered those words, general, — *You should have done it without telling me.*"

Bonaparte thought a moment; then he said:—

"You are mistaken. It was Octavius, and not Mark Anthony, who was on Sextus's galley with Lepidus."

And he went on his way to the courtyard, confining his blame to the historical blunder.

Hardly had the general appeared on the portico before the cry, "Vive Bonaparte!" resounded through the courtyard, and echoed into the street, where it was caught up and re-echoed from the lips of the dragoons drawn up in line before the gates.

"That's a good omen, general," said Roland.

"Yes. Give Lefebvre his commission at once; and if he has n't a horse, let him take one of mine. Tell him to meet me in the court of the Tuileries."

"His division is there, already."

"All the more reason, then."

Glancing about him, Bonaparte now saw Moreau and

Beurnonville awaiting him, their horses held by the orderlies. He saluted them by a gesture of his hand, already that of a master rather than that of a comrade. Then, perceiving General Debel out of uniform, he went down the steps and approached him.

“Why are you in citizen’s dress?” he asked.

“General, I was not notified. I happened to be passing along the street, and seeing the crowd before your house, I came in, fearing you were in some danger.”

“Go and put on your uniform quickly.”

“But I live the other side of Paris; it would take too long.” But he made a step to retire, nevertheless.

“Where are you going?” asked Bonaparte.

“You shall see, general.”

He had noticed an artillery-man on horseback. The man was about his size.

“Friend,” said he, “I am General Debel. By order of General Bonaparte, lend me your coat and horse, and I’ll give you furlough for the day. Here’s a louis to drink to the health of the commander-in-chief. To-morrow, come and get your horse and uniform. I live in the rue Cherche-Midi, No. 11.”

“Will nothing be done to me?”

“Yes, you shall be made a corporal.”

“Very good,” said the artillery-man; and he made over his coat and horse to General Debel.

During this time Bonaparte heard talking above him. He raised his head and saw Joseph and Bernadotte at his window.

“Once more, general,” he said to Bernadotte. “will you come with me?”

“No,” replied the other, firmly. Then, lowering his voice, he added, “You told me just now, to ‘take care.’”

“Yes.”

“Well, I say to you, ‘Take care.’”

“Of what?”

“You are going to the Tuileries?”

"Of course."

"The Tuileries are very close to the place de la Révolution."

"Pooh!" said Bonaparte; "they've moved the guillotine to the Barrière du Trône."

"What of that? The brewer Santerre still controls the faubourg Saint-Antoine, and Santerre is Moulins' friend."

"Santerre has been notified that at the first movement he makes he will be shot. Will you come?"

"No."

"As you like. You choose to separate your fortunes from mine; but I shall not separate mine from yours." Then, calling to his orderly, he said, "My horse!"

They brought him his horse. Seeing an artillery private close beside him, he exclaimed, "What are you doing here among the epaulets?"

The artillery-man began to laugh. "Don't you recognize me, general?" he said.

"Faith, it's Debel! Where did you get that horse and uniform?"

"From that artillery-man you see over there on foot, in his shirt-sleeves. It will cost you a corporal's commission."

"You're wrong, Debel; it will cost me two commissions: one for the corporal, one for the general of division. Forward, march, gentlemen! To the Tuileries!"

And bending forward on his horse, as he usually did, his left hand holding a slack rein, his right hand clenched and resting on his hip, with bent head and dreamy brow and a far-away look, he made his first steps along the glorious incline which was to lead him to a throne and — to Saint Helena.

XXIV.

THE EIGHTEENTH BRUMAIRE.

As he issued from the courtyard into the rue de la Victoire, Bonaparte saw Sébastiani's dragoons drawn up in line of battle. He tried to address them, but they stopped him at his first words.

"We want no explanations," they cried, "we know you seek the good of the Republic. Vive Bonaparte!"

The cortège followed the streets which led from the rue de la Victoire to the Tuileries, amid the cries of "Vive Bonaparte!"

General Lefebvre, according to promise, was at the gate of the palace. Bonaparte, on his arrival at the Tuileries was welcomed with the same loud cheers that had followed him along the way. Once there, he raised his head and shook it. Perhaps he was not satisfied with the cry of that name, "Bonaparte." Was he dreaming already of "Vive Napoléon"?

He advanced in front of the troops, and there, surrounded by an immense staff, he read the decree of the Five Hundred which transferred the Legislature to Saint-Cloud and gave him the command of the armed forces.

Then, either from memory or impromptu (Bonaparte never admitted any one into such secrets as these), instead of the proclamation he had dictated the night before to Bourrienne, he pronounced these words:—

"Soldiers, the Council of Ancients has given me the command of the city and the army.

“I have accepted it, in order to second measures about to be undertaken for the good of the people.

“The Republic has been ill-governed for two years. You have hoped that my return would put an end to many evils. You have welcomed me with a unanimity which imposes obligations that I now fulfil. Fulfil yours and you will second your general with the vigor, trust, and firmness that I have always found in you.

“Liberty, victory, peace will restore the French Republic to the rank it occupied in Europe before incapacity and treachery caused her to lose it.”

The troops applauded frantically: it was a declaration of war against the Directory; and soldiers will always applaud a declaration of war.

The general dismounted, and, amid cries and bravos, he entered the Tuileries. It was the second time he had crossed the threshold of the palace of the Valois, the arches of which had so ill sheltered the crown and head of the Bourbon who last had reigned there. Beside him walked the citizen Rœderer. Bonaparte started as he recognized him.

“Ah!” he said, “citizen Rœderer, you were here on the 10th of August.”

“Yes, general,” replied the future count of the Empire.

“It was you who advised Louis XVI. to go before the National Assembly.”

“Yes.”

“Bad advice, citizen Rœderer; I should not have followed it.”

“We advise men according to what we know of them. I should not give to General Bonaparte the same advice I gave to Louis XVI. When a king has the fact of his flight to Varennes behind him, it is difficult to save him.”

As Rœderer said the words they had reached a window which opened on the garden of the Tuileries. Bonaparte stopped, and seizing Rœderer by the arm, he said: —

“On the 20th of June I was there” (and he pointed with his finger to the terrace by the water) “behind that third linden; I saw, through the open window, that poor king with the phrygian cap upon his head; it was a piteous sight — I pitied him.”

“What did you do?”

“I did nothing; I could not do anything; I was only a lieutenant of artillery; but I longed to follow the others and say to him in a whisper: ‘Sire, give me four cannon and I’ll sweep the whole rabble out!’”

What would have happened, we may ask, if lieutenant Bonaparte had followed his impulse, obtained what he wanted from Louis XVI. and *swept the rabble out*, — that is to say, the people of Paris? If on the 20th of June his cannon had made a clean sweep in the king’s defence, would they have had to make another on the 13th Vendémiaire for the benefit of the Convention?

While Rœderer, who had become very grave, may have been turning over in his mind the opening facts recorded in his future “History of the Consulate,” Bonaparte presented himself at the bar of the Council of Ancients, followed by his staff, and by all those who chose to follow him. When the tumult caused by this influx of persons had subsided, the president read over to the general the decree which invested him with the military power. Then, after requesting him to take the oath, the president added: —

“He who has never promised the Nation a victory that he did not win, cannot fail to keep, religiously, his present promise to serve his country faithfully.”

Bonaparte stretched forth his hand and said solemnly:

“I swear it!”

All the generals of the suite repeated after him, each for himself: “I swear it!”

The oath was scarcely taken before Bonaparte noticed Barras’s secretary, the same Bollot whom the Director had mentioned to his two colleagues that morning. He was there simply to see what happened and give an account

of it to his patron, but Bonaparte fancied he was sent on some secret mission by Barras. He resolved to spare him the first advance and went straight to the secretary.

"Have you come on behalf of the Directors?" he said. Then, without giving Bollot the time to answer, he went on: "What have they done with that France I left so brilliant? I left peace, I find war; I left victories, I find defeats; I left the millions of Italy, I find spoliation and penury! What have become of the hundred thousand Frenchmen whom I knew by name? They are dead!"

It was not exactly to the secretary of Barras that these words should have been said; but Bonaparte wished to say them, needed to say them, and little he cared to whom he said them. Perhaps even from his point of view, it was better he should say them to some one who could not answer him. At that moment Sieyès rose.

"Citizens," he said, "the Directors Moulins and Gohier demand admittance."

"They are no longer Directors," said Bonaparte, "for there is no longer a Directory."

"But," objected Sieyès, "the Directory has not yet sent in its resignation."

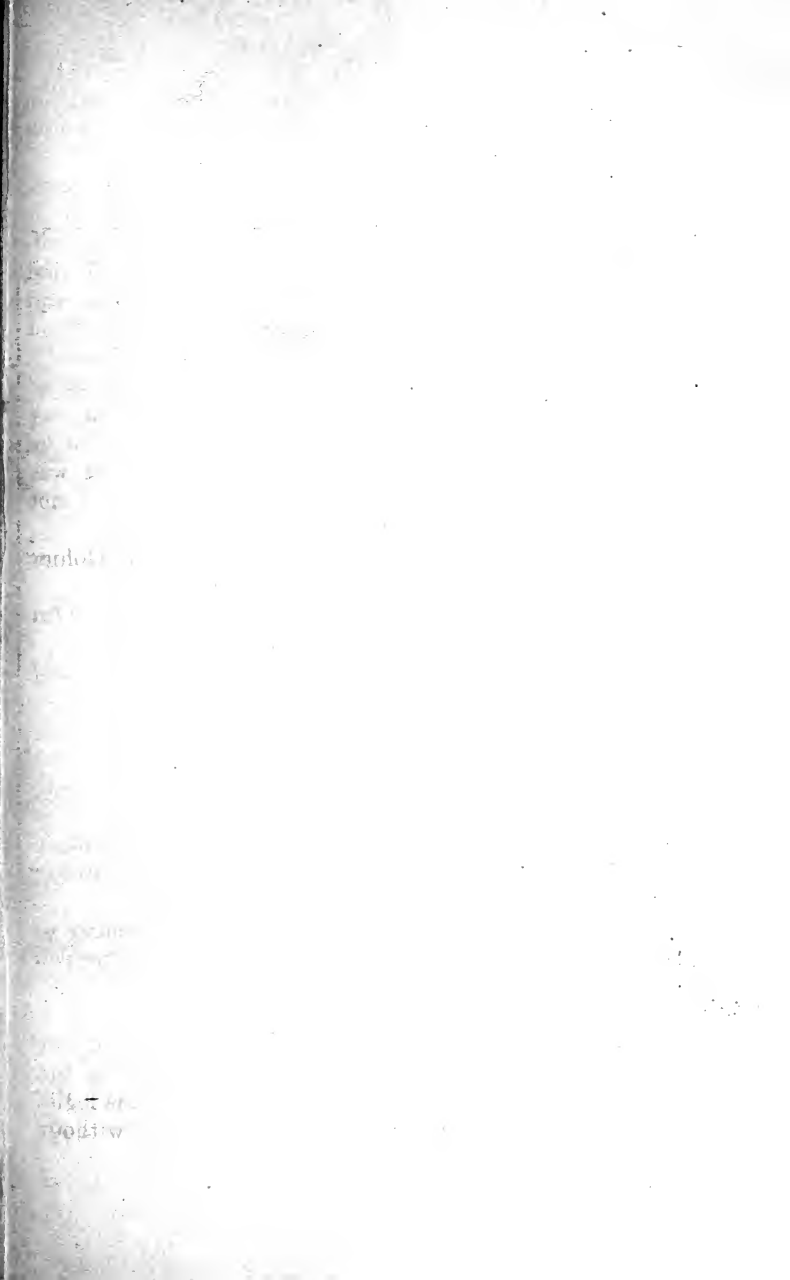
"Then admit them, and let them give it," retorted Bonaparte.

Moulins and Gohier entered. They were pale but calm. They knew they came to force a struggle, and behind their resistance a thought of the Sinnamary may have loomed. The exiles whom they sent there on the 18th Fructidor, 1797, pointed the way.

"I see with satisfaction," said Bonaparte, hastening to say it, "that you yield to our wishes and those of your two colleagues."

Gohier made a step forward, and said firmly:—

"We do not yield to either your wishes or those of our two colleagues, because the latter have resigned, but to the Law. It requires that the decree which transfers the legislative body to Saint-Cloud shall be proclaimed without





THE EIGHTEENTH BRUMAIRE.

delay. We have come here to fulfil the duty which the law imposes on us, firmly determined to defend it against all factious persons, whosoever they may be, who attempt to attack it."

"Your zeal does not surprise us," replied Bonaparte, coldly. "And it is because you are a man who loves his country that we expect you to unite with us."

"Unite with you! and why?"

"To save the Republic."

"Save the Republic! There was a time, general, when you had the honor of being its prop; but to-day the glory of saving it is reserved for us."

"How will you save it?" asked Bonaparte. "With the means your Constitution gives you? Why, that Constitution is crumbling on all sides, and even if I were not accelerating its fall at this moment, it could not last eight days longer."

"Ah!" cried Moulins, "at last you acknowledge your hostile projects!"

"My projects are not hostile!" cried Bonaparte, striking the floor with the heel of his boot. "The Republic is in peril; it must be saved, and I shall do it."

"You do it!" said Gohier. "It seems to me that it is for the Directory, and not for you to say: 'It shall be done!'"

"There is no longer a Directory."

"We heard before we entered that you had said so."

"There has been no Directory since Sieyès and Roger-Ducos resigned from it."

"You are mistaken. There is a Directory while three members of it remain, and neither Moulins nor I nor Barras have sent in our resignations."

At this moment a paper was slipped into Bonaparte's hand, and a voice said in his ear, "Read it." He read it; then he said aloud:—

"You are mistaken yourself. Barras has resigned, for here is his resignation. The law required three Directors

to make a Directory; you are but two, and whoever resists the law, as you said just now, is a rebel." Then, giving the paper to the president, he continued, "Add the resignation of the citizen Barras to that of the citizens Sieyès and Ducos, and proclaim the fall of the Directory. I shall now announce it to my soldiers."

Moulin and Gohier were confounded. This resignation of Barras cut the ground from under their feet.

Bonaparte had nothing more to do before the Council of Ancients, but there was very much for him to do in the court of the Tuileries. He went down the palace stairs followed by those who had accompanied him up.

The soldiers no sooner caught sight of him than the cries of "Vive Bonaparte!" resounded even more noisily and eagerly than before. The general sprang into the saddle and made a sign that he wished to speak to them. Ten thousand voices which had burst into cries were hushed in a moment. Silence fell, as if by enchantment.

"Soldiers!" said Bonaparte, in a voice so powerful that every one present heard it. "Your companions in arms who are now on the frontier are deprived of the necessaries of life. The people are miserable. Those who are guilty of such evils are the factious men against whom you are here assembled to-day. I hope before long to lead you to victory; but first, we must deprive all those who stand in the way of public order and general prosperity of their power to do harm."

Whether it was weariness and disgust at the Directory, or the fascination exercised by the magic being who again called them to victory, — victory, so long forgotten in his absence, — certain it is that cries of wild enthusiasm arose, and, like a train of burning powder, flew from the Tuileries to the Carrousel, from the Carrousel to the adjacent streets. Bonaparte profited by the movement; turning to Moreau, he said: —

"General, I will give you a proof of the immense confidence I have in you. Bernadotte, whom I left in my house

and who refused to join us, had the audacity to tell me that if he received orders from the Directory, he should execute them against whoever the disturbers might be. General, I confide to you the guardianship of the Luxembourg. The tranquillity of Paris and the safety of the Republic are in your hands."

Then, without awaiting Moreau's answer, he put his horse to a gallop and rode to the opposite end of the line.

Moreau, led by military ambition, had consented to play a part in this great drama; he was now forced to accept that which the author assigned him. Gohier and Moulins, on their return to the Luxembourg found nothing changed, apparently; the sentries were as usual at their posts. They retired to one of the salons used for deliberations to consult together. But they had scarcely begun their conference when General Jubé, the commandant of the Luxembourg, received orders to join Bonaparte at the Tuileries with the guard of the Directory. Their places were at once filled by Moreau and a portion of the troops who had just been electrified by Bonaparte. Nevertheless the two Directors drew up a message to the Council of the Five Hundred, in which they protested energetically against what had been done. When it was prepared Gohier handed it to his secretary, and Moulins, half dead from inanition, went to his own apartments to get some food.

It was then almost four in the afternoon. An instant later Gohier's secretary came to him in much agitation.

"Well," said Gohier, "why have you not gone?"

"Citizen president," replied the young man, "we are prisoners in the palace."

"What! prisoners?"

"The guard is changed; General Jubé is no longer in command."

"Who takes his place?"

"I think I heard them say General Moreau."

“Moreau? impossible!—and Barras, the villain! where is he?”

“He has started for his country-place at Grosbois.”

“Ah! I must see Moulins!” cried Gohier, rushing to the door.

But at the entrance to the corridor he met a sentry who barred the way. Gohier insisted.

“No one can pass,” said the sentry.

“Not pass!”

“No.”

“But I am president Gohier.”

“No one can pass,” repeated the sentry; “that is the order.”

Gohier saw it was useless to say more; the employment of force was impossible. He returned to his own rooms.

During this time General Moreau had gone to see Moulins; he wished to justify himself. Without listening to a word the ex-Director turned his back upon him; and then, as Moreau persisted, he said:—

“General, go into the antechamber; that is the place for jailers.”

Moreau bowed his head and understood for the first time into what a fatal trap his honor had fallen.

At five o'clock Bonaparte started on his return to the rue de la Victoire; all the generals and superior officers in Paris accompanied him. The blindest among them, those who had never understood the 13th Vendémiaire, who had not yet understood the return from Egypt, now saw blazing over the Tuileries the star of the future; and as everybody could not be a planet, the point to be considered was who should be satellite.

The shouts of “Vive Bonaparte!” which came from the lower part of the rue du Mont Blanc and swept like a sonorous wave toward the rue de la Victoire told Josephine of her husband's return. The impressionable creole awaited him with keen anxiety, and now sprang to meet him in such agitation that she was unable to utter a single word.

“Come, come!” said Bonaparte, becoming the kindly man he was in the bosom of his family, “compose yourself; everything has been done to-day that could be done.”

“Is it all over?”

“Oh, no!” said Bonaparte.

“Must it be done over again to-morrow?”

“Yes; but to-morrow it will be only a formality.”

That “formality” was rather rough; but as everybody knows of the events at Saint-Cloud, we shall dispense with relating them, and turn at once to their results, impatient as we are to get back to the real subject of our drama, from which the grand historical figure we have introduced has for a moment diverted us.

One word more: on the 20th Brumaire, at one in the morning, Bonaparte was appointed First Consul for ten years. He himself caused the appointment of Cambacérés and Lebrun as his colleagues under the title of Second Consuls, being firmly resolved to concentrate in his own person all the functions of not only the two consuls, but those of the ministers. On the night of the 20th Brumaire he slept at the Luxembourg in Gohier’s bed; the latter having been set at liberty, as well as his colleague Moulins.

Roland was made governor of the Luxembourg.

XXV.

AN IMPORTANT COMMUNICATION.

SOME time after this military revolution, which created a great stir in Europe, convulsing the continent for a time as a tempest convulses the ocean,— some time after, we say, on the morning of the 30th Nivôse, better known to our readers as the 20th of January, 1800, Roland in looking over the voluminous correspondence which his new office entailed upon him, found, amid fifty other letters asking for an audience, the following:—

MONSIEUR LE GOUVERNEUR, — I know your loyalty to your word ; and you will see that I rely upon it.

I wish to speak to you for five minutes, and during that time I must remain masked.

I have a request to make of you. This request you will grant or deny. In either case, as I shall have entered the palace of the Luxembourg in the interests of the First Consul Bonaparte and the royalist party, to which I belong, I shall ask for your word of honor that I be allowed to leave it as freely as you allow me to enter it.

If to-morrow, at seven in the evening, I see a solitary light in the window above the clock, I shall know that Colonel Roland de Montrevel has pledged me his word of honor, and I shall boldly present myself at the little door of the left wing of the palace opening on the garden. I shall strike three blows at intervals of two and one, after the manner of the free-masons.

In order that you may know to whom you engage, or refuse, your word, I sign a name which is known to you, — that name having been, under circumstances you have probably not forgotten, pronounced before you.

MORGAN,
Member of The Company of Jehu.

Roland read the letter twice, thought it over for a time, then suddenly he rose, went into the First Consul's study, and gave it to him silently. The latter read it without betraying the slightest emotion or even surprise ; then, with a laconism that was wholly Lacedæmonian, he said, —

“ Put the light.”

The next evening at seven o'clock a candle shone in the window above the clock, and five minutes later Roland in person was waiting at the garden door. He had scarcely stood there an instant before three blows were struck, at intervals of two and one, after the manner of the free-masons.

The door was instantly opened ; a man wrapped in a cloak was visible, sharply defined against the dun atmosphere of the wintry night. As for Roland he was completely hidden in shadow. Seeing no one, the man in the cloak remained motionless for a moment.

“ Enter ! ” said Roland.

“ Ah ! it is you, colonel ? ”

“ How do you know it is I ? ” asked Roland.

“ I recognize your voice.”

“ My voice ! but during the few moments we were together in the dining-room at Avignon I do not remember that I said a word.”

“ In that case I must have heard your voice elsewhere.”

Roland searched in vain for a key to this mystery ; but the other said, gayly : —

“ Is the fact that I recognize your voice any reason why we should stand at this door ? ”

“ No, certainly not,” said Roland. “ Follow me ; take the lapel of my coat, for I have purposely had the lights put out in the passages and stairs which lead to my room.”

“ I am much obliged for your intention ; but I know that I could cross the palace on your word in broad daylight with perfect safety.”

“ You have my word,” said Roland, “ and may rely upon it.”

Morgan needed no encouragement; he followed his guide without hesitation. At the head of the staircase Roland took a passage that was also pitch dark, went twenty steps, opened a door, and entered his own room. Morgan followed him. The room was lighted by two wax-candles only. Once there, Morgan took off his cloak and laid his pistols on a table.

“What are you doing?” asked Roland.

“With your permission,” replied Morgan, laughing, “I am making myself more comfortable.”

“But those pistols you have just laid aside —”

“Ah! did you think it was against you that I brought them?”

“Against whom then?”

“Why, that damned police; you can easily imagine that I don’t care to let citizen Fouché lay hold of me, — at any rate not without burning the moustache of the first of his minions that lays hands upon me.”

“But once here, you feel you have nothing to fear?”

“Exactly,” said the other, “I have your word.”

“Then why don’t you unmask?”

“Because my face only half belongs to me; the other half belongs to my companions. Who knows if one of us being recognized may not drag the others to the guillotine? For of course you know, colonel, we don’t hide from ourselves that danger.”

“Then why do you risk it?”

“Ah, what a question! Why do you go into battle, when a ball may make a hole in your breast or take off your head?”

“That is a very different thing, permit me to say so; on the battle-field I risk an honorable death.”

“Ha! do you suppose that on the day I get my head cut off by the revolutionary triangle I shall think myself dishonored? Not the least in the world! I am a soldier like yourself; only we can’t all serve our cause in the same way. Every religion has its heroes and martyrs; happy

the heroes in this world, and happy the martyrs in the next."

The young man uttered these words with a conviction which moved, or rather we should say, astonished Roland. Morgan, however, very quickly abandoned enthusiasm, and reverted to the gayety which appeared to be a distinctive trait of his character.

"But I did not come here to talk political philosophy," he said. "I came to ask you to let me speak to the First Consul."

"Speak to the First Consul!" exclaimed Roland.

"Yes. Read my letter over again; did I not tell you I had a request to make?"

"Yes."

"Well, that request is to let me speak to General Bonaparte."

"But allow me to say that, as I did not expect any such request—"

"It surprises you—makes you uneasy, perhaps? My dear colonel, you may, if you can't trust my word, search me from head to foot, and you will see that I have no weapons except those pistols; and those I have n't now, inasmuch as they are on your table. More than that, take those pistols, one in each hand, and stand between the First Consul and me, and blow my brains out at the first suspicious motion I make. Will that suit you?"

"But if I disturb the First Consul and ask him to see you, how can I be sure that your communication is worth his hearing?"

"Oh, as for that, I'll answer for it!" Then, in his joyous tones, he added: "I am, for the time being, the ambassador of a crowned, or rather a discrowned head—a condition which does not make it less revered by noble hearts. Moreover, I shall take up very little of your general's time, Monsieur Roland; the moment the conversation seems to him too long he can dismiss me; he will not have to say the word twice, I assure you."

Roland was silent and thoughtful for a moment.

"Is it to the First Consul only that you can make this communication?"

"To the First Consul only, because only the First Consul can give the answer."

"Very well; wait until I take his orders."

Roland made a step toward the general's room; then stopped and cast an uneasy glance at a mass of papers lying on his table. Morgan intercepted the look.

"Ah!" he exclaimed, "you are afraid that in your absence I should read those papers. If you only knew how I detest reading! If my death-warrant lay on that table I believe I should excuse myself from reading it on the ground that it was a clerk's business. Colonel Roland, my feet are rather cold and I am going to sit in your armchair and warm them. I shall not stir till you return."

"Very good, monsieur," said Roland, and he went to the First Consul.

Bonaparte was talking with General Hédouville commanding the troops in La Vendée; hearing the door open he turned impatiently.

"I told Bourrienne I would not see any one!"

"So he said, general; but I answered that I was nobody."

"That's true. What do you want? Be quick."

"He is in my room."

"Who?"

"The man of Avignon."

"Ah, ha! what does he want?"

"To see you."

"See me?"

"Yes, you, general; does that surprise you?"

"No, but what does he want to say to me?"

"He refuses to tell me; but I think I can say he is neither a fool nor a madman."

"But he may be an assassin."

Roland shook his head.

“ Well, if it is you who introduce him — ”

“ He is willing that I should be of the conference and stand between you and him.”

Bonaparte reflected a moment.

“ Bring him in,” he said.

“ But you know, general, that except me — ”

“ Yes ; General Hédouville will be so kind as to wait a few moments ; our conference is of a nature that is not exhausted in one interview. Go, Roland.”

Roland left the room, crossed Bourrienne’s office, re-entered his own room, and found Morgan where he had left him, warming his feet.

“ Come ! ” he said, “ the First Consul expects you.”

Morgan rose and followed Roland. When they entered Bonaparte’s study the latter was alone. He cast a rapid glance on the Companion of Jehu, and felt no doubt that he was the same man he had seen at Avignon.

Morgan had paused a few steps from the door, and was looking with curiosity at Bonaparte, convincing himself that he was the same dark young man he had seen at the table d’hôte on the occasion of his returning the money to Jean Picot.

“ Come nearer,” said the First Consul.

Morgan bowed and made three steps forward.

Bonaparte returned the bow with a slight motion of his head.

“ You told my aide-de-camp, Colonel Roland, that you had a communication to make to me ? ”

“ Yes, citizen First Consul.”

“ Does that communication require a private interview ? ”

“ No, citizen First Consul ; although it is of such importance that — ”

“ You would rather I were alone ? ”

“ Yes, but prudence — ”

“ The most prudent thing in France, citizen Morgan, is courage.”

“ My presence here, general, is enough to prove that I agree with you.”

Bonaparte turned to his aide-de-camp.

"Leave us, Roland," he said.

"But, general! —" objected Roland.

Bonaparte went up to him and said in a low voice:—

"I see how it is! you are curious to know what this knight of the highway has to say to me. Well, don't be uneasy, I will tell you afterwards."

"That is not it! but if, as you said just now, the man should be an assassin —"

"Did n't you assure me he was not? Come, don't be a baby; go!"

Roland left the room.

"Now that we are alone, monsieur," said the First Consul, "speak!"

Without replying in words, Morgan drew a letter from his pocket and gave it to the general. Bonaparte examined it. It was addressed to him, and the seal bore the fleurs-de-lis of France.

"Oh!" he said, "what is this, monsieur?"

"Read it, citizen First Consul."

Bonaparte opened the letter and looked at the signature.

"Louis," he said.

"Louis," repeated Morgan.

"What Louis?"

"Louis de Bourbon, I presume."

"Monsieur le Comte de Provence, brother of Louis XVI.?"

"Consequently, Louis XVIII., now that his nephew the dauphin is dead."

Bonaparte looked curiously at the stranger; it was evident that the name of Morgan was a pseudonym, intended to hide his real name. Then, turning his eyes upon the letter he read as follows:—

JANUARY 30, 1800.

Whatever may be their apparent conduct, monsieur, men like you can never inspire distrust. You have accepted an exalted post, and I thank you for doing so. You know, better than others, what force and

power are needed to make the happiness of a great nation. Save France from her own madness and you will fulfil the desire of my heart ; restore her king, and future generations will bless your memory. If you doubt my gratitude, choose your own place and the future of your friends. As for my principles, I am a Frenchman, — forbearing by nature, still more by judgment.

No! the conqueror of Lodi, of Castiglione, of Arcola, cannot prefer an empty celebrity to fame. Lose no more precious time. We can secure the glory of France. I say *we* because I have need of Bonaparte for that which he cannot achieve without me. General, the eyes of Europe are upon you, glory awaits you, and I am eager to restore my people to happiness.

LOUIS.

Bonaparte turned to the young man, who remained erect, motionless, and silent as a statue.

“Do you know the contents of this letter?” he asked.

The young man bowed: “Yes, citizen First Consul.”

“It was sealed.”

“It was sent unsealed under cover to the person who entrusted me with it. Before giving me that letter he made me read it, that I might know its full importance.”

“Can I know the name of the person who entrusted you with it?”

“Georges Cadoudal.”

Bonaparte started slightly.

“You know Georges Cadoudal?”

“He is a friend of mine.”

“Why did he entrust it to you, rather than to others?”

“Because he knew that in telling me to give it to you with my own hand, it would be done.”

“You have certainly kept your promise, monsieur.”

“Not altogether, citizen First Consul.”

“How do you mean? Have you not given the letter to me yourself?”

“Yes, but I promised to bring back an answer.”

“And if I tell you that I shall not make one?”

“You will have answered, — not exactly as I could have wished, but, at any rate, it will be an answer.”

Bonaparte reflected for several moments. Then, shaking his shoulders as if to cast off reflection, he exclaimed:—

“They are fools!”

“Who, citizen First Consul?”

“Those who write me such letters as that—fools, arch-fools! Do they take me for a man who patterns his conduct by the past? Play Monk! what good would that do? Bring back another Charles II.? No, faith! that’s not worth while. When a man has Toulon, the 13th Vendémiaire, Lodi, Castiglione, Arcola, Rivoli, the Pyramids behind him, he’s no Monk! he has a right to aspire to something else than a duchy of Albemarle and the command of the forces by sea and land of his Majesty King Louis XVIII.!”

“For that reason you are asked to make your own conditions, citizen First Consul.”

Bonaparte started at the sound of a voice, as though he had forgotten that any one was present.

“Not counting,” he went on, “that it is a ruined family, a dead branch of a rotten trunk. The Bourbons have so intermarried with one another that the race has depraved itself; all its vigor, all its sap was used up in Louis XIV. You know history, monsieur?” said Bonaparte, turning to the young man.

“Yes, general,” he answered, “that is, as well as a *ci-devant* can know it.”

“Well, you must have observed in history, in the history of France especially, that each race has its point of departure, its culmination, its decadence. Look at the direct line of the Capets; starting from Hugues Capet they attained their grandeur in Philippe-Auguste and Louis IX., and fell with Philippe V. and Charles IV. Look at the Valois; starting from Philippe VI. they culminated in François I. and fell with Charles IX. and Henri III. See the Bourbons; starting with Henri of Navarre they have their culminating point in Louis XIV. and fall with Louis XV. and Louis XVI.—only, they fall lower than the others;

lower in debauchery with Louis XV., lower in misfortune with Louis XVI. You talk to me of the Stuarts, and you point me to the example of Monk. Will you tell me who succeeded to Charles II. ? James II. And who to James II. ? William of Orange, a usurper. Would n't it have been a great deal better, I ask you, if Monk had put the crown on his own head ? Well, if I were fool and madman enough to give back the throne to Louis XVIII., who, like Charles II. could have no children, his brother, like James II., would succeed him as Charles X. ; and, like James II., he would be driven off the throne and out of the country by some William of Orange. No, no ! God has not put the destiny of the great and glorious country which we call France into my hands that I should cast it back to those who have gambled with it and lost it."

"Permit me to remark, general, that I did not ask you for all that."

"But I, I ask you —"

"You are doing me the honor to take me for posterity."

Bonaparte started, turned round, saw to whom he was speaking, and was silent.

"I only asked," continued Morgan, with a dignity which surprised the man he addressed, "for a yes, or a no."

"And why do you want that ?"

"To know whether we must continue to make war upon you as an enemy or fall at your feet as a savior."

"War!" said Bonaparte, "war! Madmen they are who war with me ; can they not see that I am the elect of God ?"

"Attila said the same thing."

"Yes, but he was the elect of destruction, I of a new era ; the grass withered where he stepped ; the harvests ripen where my plough furrows. War! tell me what has become of those who have made it against me. They lie in the plains of Piedmont, Lombardy, and Cairo."

"You forget La Vendée ; La Vendée is still afoot."

"Afoot, yes! but where are her leaders ; where La Rochejaquelin, Lescure, Cathelineau ; where d'Elbée, Bonchamps, Stofflet, Charette ?"

“You speak of men only: the men have been mown down, it is true; but the principle is there, erect; and around it and for it are fighting Susannet, Autichamp, Grignon, Frotté, Châtillon, Cadoudal; the younger may not be worth the elder, but if they die as their elders died, what more can we ask?”

“Let them beware! If I decide on a campaign in La Vendée, I’ll send them no Santerres, no Rossignols —”

“The Convention sent Kléber, and the Directory, Hoche! —”

“I shall send no one; I shall go myself.”

“Nothing can happen to them worse than happened to Lescure and to Charette.”

“It may happen that I pardon them.”

“Cato has taught us that Cæsar’s pardon may be escaped.”

“Ha, remark what you are doing, — you are quoting a republican!”

“Cato was one of the men whose example can be followed, no matter to what party we belong.”

“And suppose I were to tell you that I hold La Vendée in the hollow of my hand?”

“You!”

“And that within three months she will lay down her arms if I choose?”

The young man shook his head.

“You do not believe me?”

“I hesitate to believe you.”

“If I affirm to you that what I say is true, if I prove it to you by telling you the means, or rather the men, by whom it will be brought about, what then?”

“If a man like General Bonaparte affirms a thing to me, I shall believe it; and if that thing which he affirms is the pacification of La Vendée, I shall say to him: Beware! Better for you La Vendée fighting than La Vendée conspiring. La Vendée fighting means the sword, La Vendée conspiring means the dagger.”

“Ah yes! I know your dagger,” said Bonaparte; “here it is.”

And he took from a drawer the dagger which he had taken from Roland, and laid it on the table within reach of Morgan’s hand.

“But,” he added, “there is some distance between the dagger of an assassin and my breast. Try.”

And he advanced to the young man with a flaming eye.

“I did not come here to assassinate you,” said Morgan, coldly, “later, if I think your death necessary to the triumph of our cause I shall do my best; and if I fail it will not be because you are Marius and I the Cimbrian. Have you anything else to say to me, citizen First Consul?” continued the young man, bowing.

“Yes; tell Cadoudal that whenever he wishes to fight the national enemy, instead of fighting Frenchmen, I have a colonel’s commission ready signed in my desk for him.”

“Cadoudal commands, not a regiment, but an army; why should you think he would step back from general to colonel? Have you nothing else to say to me, citizen First Consul?”

“Yes; have you any means of sending my answer to the Comte de Provence?”

“You mean King Louis XVIII.?”

“Don’t let us squabble over words; I mean to him who wrote me that letter.”

“His envoy is now in the camp at Aubiers.”

“Well, I have changed my mind; I shall send a written answer. Those Bourbons are so blind they would certainly misinterpret my silence.”

And Bonaparte, sitting down at his desk, wrote the following letter, with a care and precision that showed he wished to make it legible:—

I have received your letter, monsieur. I thank you for the good opinion you express of me. You must not wish for your return to France; it could only be over a hundred thousand dead bodies.

Sacrifice your own interests to the peace and welfare of France; history will applaud you for it. I am not insensible to the misfortunes of your family; I should hear with pleasure that you were surrounded by all that could contribute to the tranquillity of your retreat.

BONAPARTE.

Then folding and sealing the letter he directed it to "Monsieur le Comte de Provence," gave it to Morgan, and called Roland as if he knew that the latter was not far off.

"General!" said the young officer, appearing instantly.

"Conduct monsieur to the street yourself," said Bonaparte; "until then, you are responsible for him."

Roland bowed in sign of obedience, and motioned to the young man, who said not a word, to pass before him; then he followed him out. But before leaving the room Morgan cast a last look at Bonaparte. The latter was standing motionless, mute, his arms folded, his eyes fixed on the dagger, which occupied his thoughts more than he was willing to admit even to himself.

As they crossed Roland's room, the Companion of Jehu gathered up his cloak and his pistols. While he was putting the latter in his belt, Roland said to him:—

"The citizen First Consul seems to have shown you a dagger which I gave him."

"Yes, monsieur," answered Morgan.

"And you recognized it?"

"Not that one in particular; all our daggers are alike."

"Well, then," said Roland, "I shall tell you where it came from."

"Ah, where was that?"

"From the breast of a friend of mine into which your companions, perhaps you yourself, thrust it."

"Possibly," said the young man, carelessly; "but your friend must have exposed himself to punishment."

"My friend wished to see what was happening at night in the Chartreuse of Seillon."

"He did wrong."

"But I did the same wrong the night before; why did nothing happen to me?"

"Probably some talisman protects you."

"Monsieur, let me tell you something. I am a straightforward man who walks by daylight; I have a horror of dark, mysterious ways."

"Happy those who can walk by daylight on the highroads, Monsieur de Montrevel."

"That is why I shall tell you of an oath I have taken, Monsieur Morgan. As I drew the dagger you have seen from the breast of my friend — carefully, that I might not draw his soul with it — I swore that it was war to the death between his murderers and me. It was largely to tell you that, monsieur, that I gave you a pledge of safety here to-night."

"That is an oath I hope to see you forget, Monsieur de Montrevel."

"It is an oath that I shall keep under all circumstances, Monsieur Morgan, and I should be glad if you would give me the opportunity to keep it as soon as possible."

"In what way, monsieur?"

"Well, for example, by accepting a meeting with me in the Bois de Boulogne or at Vincennes. We need not say that we fight because you or your friends assassinated Sir John Tanlay. We can say that the duel was on account" (Roland thought a moment) — "on account of that eclipse of the moon which takes place on the 12th of next month. Will that suit you?"

"Any pretext would suit me, monsieur," replied Morgan, in a tone of sadness of which he might have seemed incapable, "if the duel itself could take place. You have taken an oath, you say, and mean to keep it. Well, every initiate who enters The Company of Jehu is compelled to swear that he will not expose in any personal quarrel a life which belongs to the Cause, and not to himself."

"Oh, I see; you assassinate, but you do not fight."

"You are mistaken; we fight sometimes."

“Have the goodness to point out to me an occasion when I may study that phenomenon.”

“Easily enough. If you and five or six men as resolute as yourself will take your places in some diligence which carries the government money, and will defend it against our attack, the occasion you seek will come to you; but, believe me, do better than that, — do not come in our way.”

“Is that a threat, monsieur?” said the young man, raising his head.

“No, monsieur,” said Morgan, in a gentle, almost supplicating voice, “it is an entreaty.”

“Is it addressed particularly to me, or does it include others?”

“I make it to you particularly.”

And the Companion of Jehu laid a strong emphasis on the last word.

“Ah, ha!” cried the young man, “then I have the honor to interest you?”

“As a brother,” replied Morgan, in the same soft, caressing voice.

“Well, well!” said Roland, “this is evidently a wager.”

At this moment Bourrienne entered.

“Roland,” he said, “the First Consul wants you.”

“Give me time to conduct monsieur to the door, and I’ll be with him.”

“Make haste; you know he does not like to wait.”

“Have the goodness to follow me, monsieur,” said Roland, to his mysterious companion.

And Roland, taking the same path by which he had brought Morgan in, took him back, not to the door opening on the garden (for the garden was now locked up), but to that on the street. When they reached it, he stopped.

“Monsieur,” he said to Morgan, “I gave you my word of honor for a safe-conduct; I have kept it faithfully; but, in order that there may be no misunderstanding between us, have the goodness to tell me that you fully understand it to have been for this day only.”

"That is how I understand it, monsieur."

"You give me back my word?"

"I should like to keep it, monsieur, but I recognize that you are free to take it back."

"That is all I wish to know. Au revoir, Monsieur Morgan."

"Permit me not to offer you the same wish, Monsieur de Montrevel."

The two young men bowed to each other with perfect courtesy. Roland re-entered the Luxembourg, and Morgan, following the line of shadow projected by the walls, took one of the little streets which lead to the place Saint-Sulpice.

It is he whom we are now to follow.

XXVI.

THE BALL OF THE VICTIMS.

AFTER taking about a hundred steps Morgan removed his mask ; he ran more risk of being noticed as a masked man than of being recognized unmasked.

When he reached the rue Taranne he knocked at the door of a small lodging-house which made the corner of that street and the rue du Dragon, entered, took a candlestick from a table and a key numbered 20, and went upstairs without exciting other attention than a well-known lodger would when returning home. The clock was striking as he closed the door of his room. He listened attentively to the strokes, the light of his candle not reaching as far as the chimney-piece on which the clock was placed. He counted ten.

“Good !” he said to himself ; “I shall not be late.”

In spite of this probability, Morgan seemed desirous of not losing time. He passed a bit of tinder paper under a heater on the hearth ; it caught fire instantly, and with it he lit four wax-candles, all there were in the room,— placing two on the fireplace and two on a bureau opposite ; then he opened a drawer of the bureau and took out and spread upon the bed a complete dress of the Incroyable of the period in the last fashion. It comprised a short coat cut square across the body in front with long tails behind, of a soft shade of color between a pearl-grey and a pale-green, a waistcoat of buff plush with eighteen mother-of-pearl buttons, an immense white cravat of the finest cambric, tight trousers of white cassimere decorated with a knot of ribbons where they buttoned above the calves, silk stockings pearl-

grey in color, but striped transversely with the same pale-green as the coat, and very delicate pumps with diamond buckles. The inevitable eye-glass was not omitted. As for the hat, it was precisely like that in which Carle Vernet painted his dandy of the Directory.

When these things were ready Morgan seemed to grow impatient. At the end of five minutes he rang the bell. A waiter came.

"Where is the wig-maker?" asked Morgan. "Hasn't he come yet?"

In those days wig-makers were not yet called hair-dressers.

"Yes, citizen," answered the waiter, "he came; but you had not come in, so he went away saying he'd be back. There's the bell now; probably —"

"Here I am!" said a voice at the door.

"Ah, bravo!" cried Morgan. "Come in, master Cadenette; you must make a sort of Adonis of me."

"That will not be difficult, Monsieur le comte," replied the wig-maker.

"Look here, look here! do you mean to compromise me, citizen Cadenette?"

"Monsieur le comte, I do entreat you, call me Cadenette only, that will honor me as a proof of familiarity; but don't call me citizen — fy! that's a revolutionary denomination. In the very worst of the Terror I always called my wife *Madame* Cadenette. Now excuse me for having kept you waiting; but to-night there's a great ball in the rue du Bac, the ball of the Victims (the wig-maker emphasized the last word). I should have thought that M. le comte would be there."

"Ah, ça!" said Morgan, laughing, "so you are still a royalist, Cadenette?"

The wig-maker laid his hand tragically on his heart.

"Monsieur le comte," he said, "it is not only a matter of conscience with me, but a matter of State interest."

"Conscience, I can understand that, Cadenette; but State

interest! — what the devil has the honorable guild of wig-makers to do with politics?”

“Monsieur le comte!” exclaimed Cadenette, all the while getting ready to dress his client’s hair, “you, to ask me that! you, an aristocrat!”

“Hush, Cadenette.”

“Monsieur le comte, we *ci-devants* can say that to each other.”

“Ho! so you are a *ci-devant*, are you?”

“To the core. In what style am I to dress M. le comte’s hair?”

“Dogs’ ears, and tied up behind.”

“With a touch of powder?”

“Two, if you like.”

“Ah, monsieur; just to think that for five years I was the only man who had an atom of powder *à la maréchale!* Why, to own a box of it was enough to get you guillotined.”

“I have known men guillotined for less than that, Cadenette. But explain to me how it is that you are a *ci-devant*. I like to understand everything.”

“It is very simple, monsieur le comte. You admit, don’t you, that among the guilds there were some that were more or less aristocratic?”

“No doubt some were nearer to the higher classes of society.”

“That’s it, monsieur le comte. Well, the highest classes of society, *we* held them by the hair of their head. I, such as you see me, I have dressed the hair of Madame de Polignac; my father dressed that of Madame du Barry; my grandfather that of Madame de Pompadour; we had our privileges, monsieur; we carried swords. It is true that to avoid accidents, such as might happen among hot-heads like us, our swords were usually of wood; but, at any rate, if they were not the actual thing they were a good imitation of it. Yes, monsieur le comte,” continued Cadenette, with a sigh, “those days, ah! they were the good days, not for wig-makers only, but for France. We were in all the secrets,

all the intrigues; nothing was hidden from us; and there is no instance known, monsieur le comte, of a wig-maker betraying a secret. Look at our poor queen — to whom did she trust her diamonds? To the great, the illustrious Léonard, the prince of wig-makers. I tell you, Monsieur le comte, that two men alone overthrew the scaffolding of a power which rested on the wigs of Louis XIV., on the puffs of the Regency, the frizettes of Louis XV., and the cushions of Marie Antoinette.”

“And those two men, those levellers, those revolutionaries, who were they, Cadenette? — that I may doom them, when I get into power, to universal execration.”

“Monsieur Rousseau and citizen Talma: Monsieur Rousseau, who said that absurdity, ‘We must return to nature;’ and citizen Talma, who invented the Titus style of hair-dressing.”

“That’s true, Cadenette, that’s very true.”

“When the Directory came in there was a moment’s hope. Monsieur Barras never gave up powder, and citizen Moulins did keep to his queue; but now, you see, the 18th Brumaire has knocked it all over; how could any one friz Bonaparte’s lank hair, I’d like to know! Ah! there,” continued Cadenette, puffing out the dogs’ ears of his client, “there’s hair for you! — aristocratic hair, soft and fine as silk, which takes the tongs so well that one would really think you wore a wig. Look at yourself, M. le comte; you said I was to make you an Adonis. Ah! if Venus had seen you so, it is not of Adonis that Mars would have been jealous!”

And Cadenette, now at the end of his labors and satisfied with their result, presented a hand-mirror to Morgan, who examined himself complacently.

“Well done!” he said to the wig-maker. “My dear fellow, you really are an artist. Recollect that style, and if they ever cut my head off, I shall choose to have it dressed like that,—for there will probably be women at my execution.”

“And M. le comte wants them to regret him?” said the wig-maker, seriously.

“Yes; and meantime, my dear Cadenette, here is a crown to reward your labors. Have the goodness to tell them below to call a carriage for me.”

Cadenette sighed.

“Monsieur le comte,” he said, “time was when I should have answered, ‘Show yourself at court, that is pay enough for me;’ but alas! there is now no court, and a man must live. I will order the carriage.”

Whereupon, Cadenette sighed again, put Morgan’s crown into his pocket, made the reverential bow of wig-makers and dancing-masters, and left the young man to complete his toilet.

The head being now dressed, the rest was soon done; the cravat alone took time, owing to the many failures that occurred; but Morgan finally concluded that difficult task with an experienced hand, and as eleven o’clock was striking he was ready to start. Cadenette had not forgotten his message, a hackney-coach was at the door; Morgan jumped into it, calling out to the driver:—

“Rue du Bac, No. 60.”

The coach turned into the rue de Grenelle, went up the rue du Bac, and stopped at No. 60.

“Here’s a double fare, my friend,” said Morgan, “on condition that you do not stand before the door.”

The driver took the three francs and drove away round the corner of the rue de Varennes. Morgan looked up at the front of the house; it seemed as though he must be mistaken, so dark and silent was it; but Morgan did not hesitate; he rapped in a peculiar manner.

The door opened. At the farther end of the courtyard was a building brilliantly lighted. The young man went toward it, and as he approached, the sound of instruments reached his ear. He went up one flight and entered the dressing-room. There he gave his cloak to the usher whose business it was to take the wraps.

“Here is your number,” said the usher; “your weapons must be deposited in the gallery, where you can find them again easily.”

Morgan put the number into his pocket and entered a great gallery transformed into an arsenal. It contained a perfect collection of arms of all kinds: pistols, muskets, carbines, swords, daggers. As the ball might, at any moment be invaded by the police, it was necessary that every gentleman should have his weapons at hand. Laying his aside where he could easily find them, Morgan entered the ball-room.

We doubt if any pen could give the reader an adequate idea of the scene of that ball. Originally, as the name indicated, no one was admitted except by the strange right of having relatives who had either been sent to the scaffold by the Convention and the Commune, or blown to pieces by Collot d'Herbois, or drowned by Carrier. As, however, the number guillotined during the three years' Terror, had far outnumbered the other victims, the dresses of the majority of those now present were the clothes of the victims of the scaffold. Nearly all the young girls whose mothers and elder sisters had fallen by the hand of the executioner, wore the same dress their mothers and their sisters had worn for the last lugubrious ceremony, — that is, a white gown, a red shawl, with their hair cut short at the nape of their necks. Some added to this costume, already characteristic, a detail that was even more significant: they knotted about their necks a thread of scarlet silk, fine as the blade of a razor, which (as in Faust's Margaret at the witches' sabbath) indicated the cut of the knife between the throat and the collar-bone.

As to the men who were in the same case, they wore the collars of their coats turned down behind, those of their shirts wide open, their necks bare, their hair cut short.

But many others had now the right of entrance besides those whose relatives were Victims; some had made victims themselves; these latter were increasing. There were present men of forty and forty-five years of age, who had been trained in the boudoirs of the beautiful courtesans of the

seventeenth century, who had known Madame du Barry in the attics of Versailles, Sophie Arnoult with M. de Lauraguais, la Duthé with the Comte d'Artois, — men who had borrowed from the courtesies of vice the polish with which they covered their ferocity. They were still young and handsome; they entered a salon tossing their perfumed hair and opening their scented handkerchiefs; which was not a mere useless precaution, for if the odor of musk and verberna had not masked it they would have smelt of blood.

There were also men of twenty-five to thirty, dressed with extreme elegance, members of the association of Avengers, who seemed possessed by the mania of assassination, the lust of slaughtering, the frenzy of blood which no blood quenched, — men who, when the chance of killing came, killed all, friends or enemies; men who carried their business methods into the business of murder, giving their bloody cheques for the heads of such or such Jacobins and paying them at sight.

There were younger men, eighteen and twenty years of age, almost children, but children fed, like Achilles, on the marrow of wild beasts, like Pyrrhus, on the flesh of bears; here were the bandit-pupils of Schiller, the apprentice judges of the Sainte-Vehme, — that strange generation which follows some mighty political convulsion, like the Titans after chaos, the hydras after the Deluge, in short, like the vultures and the crows after carnage.

Here then was a spectre, an iron spectre, impassible, implacable, inflexible; men call it Retaliation. And the spectre mingled with the guests; it entered these gilded salons, it signalled with a look, a gesture, a nod, and it was followed wheresoever it led.

The Terror had affected much cynicism in clothes, a Spartan austerity in its food, the profound contempt of a barbarous people for arts and knowledge. The Thermidorian reaction, on the contrary, was elegant, opulent, adorned; it exhausted all luxuries, all pleasures, as in the days of Louis XV.; with one addition, — the luxury of vengeance, the lust of blood.

Fréron's name was given to this youth of the day; it was called the *jeunesse Fréron*, or the *jeunesse dorée*. Why Fréron? Why should he more than others receive that strange and fatal honor?

I cannot tell you; my researches (and those who know me will do me the justice to admit that when I have an end in view I do not count the cost of them), — my researches have not discovered an answer. It was a whim of fashion, and fashion is a goddess more capricious than fortune.

Our readers will hardly know to-day who Fréron was; the Fréron who was Voltaire's assailant is better known than he who was the patron of these elegant assassins. One was the father of the other. Louis Stanislas was son of Élie-Catherine; the father died of rage at finding his journal suppressed by Miromesnil, Keeper of the Seals. The other, irritated by the injustices to which his father had been subjected, eagerly embraced the revolutionary doctrines. Instead of his father's paper, the "Année Littéraire" strangled to death in 1775, he created in 1789 the "Orateur du Peuple." He was sent to the South on a special mission, and Marseille and Toulon retain to this day the memory of his cruelties. But all was forgotten when, on the 9th Thermidor, he proclaimed himself against Robespierre, and assisted in casting from the altar of the Supreme Being the colossus who, being an apostle, had made himself a god. Fréron, repudiated by the Mountain, which abandoned him to the heavy jaws of Moise Bayle; Fréron, disdainfully repulsed by the Girondins, who delivered him over to the imprecations of Isnard; Fréron (as the terrible and picturesque orator of the Var remarked), Fréron, naked, covered with the leprosy of crime, was accepted, caressed, petted by the Thermidorians. Then, from the camp of the latter he passed into that of the royalists, and, without any reason whatsoever for obtaining that fatal honor, he found himself, all of a sudden, at the head of a powerful party of youth, energy, and vengeance, standing between the passions of the day which led to everything and the impotence of the law which permitted all.

It was to the midst of this *jeunesse dorée*, this *jeunesse Fréron*, mouthing its words, slurring its *r*'s and pronouncing its *g*'s and *j*'s like *z*'s, giving its "word of honor" about everything, that Morgan now made his way.

It must be admitted that the assemblage, in spite of the clothes it wore, in spite of the memories those clothes recalled, was wildly gay. This seems incomprehensible, but it was so. Explain, if you can, that dance of death at the beginning of the fifteenth century, which, with all the fury of a modern galop led by Musard, whirled its chain through the Cemetery of the Innocents, and left amid the tombs fifty thousand of its votaries.

Morgan was evidently looking for some one.

An elegant young man who was dipping into the silver-gilt comfit-box of a charming victim, with a bleeding finger, the only part of his delicate hand that had not been washed with almond paste, tried to stop him and tell him the particulars of the expedition from which he had brought back this bloody trophy; but Morgan smiled, pressed the other gloved hand, and contented himself with replying, —

"I am looking for some one."

"Important?"

"Company of Jehu."

The young man with the bloody finger let him pass.

An adorable Fury (as Corneille would have called her) whose hair was held up by a dagger with a point as sharp as a needle, barred his way, saying: —

"Morgan, you are the handsomest, the bravest, the most deserving of love, of all the men present. What have you to say to the woman who tells you that?"

"I answer that I love already," said Morgan, "and that my heart is too narrow to hold one hatred and two loves;" and he continued his search.

Two young men who were engaged in a discussion, one saying, "He was English," the other, "He was German," caught at Morgan and stopped him.

"Here is the man," said one, "who can settle it for us."

"No," said Morgan, trying to pass them, "I'm in a hurry."

"There is only a word to say," persisted the other. "We have made a bet, Saint-Amand and I, that the man who was tried and executed in the Chartreuse of Seillon was, he says a German, I say an Englishman; which was he?"

"I don't know," replied Morgan; "I was not there. Ask Hector; he presided that night."

"Tell us where Hector is?"

"Tell me where Tiffauges is; I am looking for him."

"Over there, at the end of the room," said the young man, pointing to a part of the hall where the dance was more than usually gay and animated. "You will recognize him by his waistcoat; and his trousers are not to be despised. I shall have a pair made like them with the skin of the first hound I encounter."

Morgan did not waste time in asking in what way Tiffauges's waistcoat was remarkable, and by what queer cut or precious material his trousers had won the approbation of a man as expert in such matters as he who had spoken to him. He went straight to the point indicated, saw the person of whom he was in search, dancing an *été*, which seemed by the intricacy of its weaving (if we may use so technical a term) to have issued from the salons of Vestris himself.

Morgan made a sign to the dancer, who instantly stopped, bowed to his partner, led her to her seat, excused himself for leaving her, and then returned to take Morgan's arm.

"Have you seen him?" he said to Morgan.

"I have just left him."

"You delivered the king's letter?"

"To himself."

"Did he read it?"

"At once."

"Has he sent an answer?"

"Two, — one verbal, one written; the second dispenses with the first."

"You have it?"

"Here it is."

"Do you know the contents?"

"Yes; a refusal."

"Positive?"

"Nothing could be more positive."

"Does he know that the moment he takes all hope away from us we shall treat him as an enemy?"

"I told him so."

"What did he answer?"

"He did not answer; he shrugged his shoulders."

"What do you think his intentions are?"

"Not difficult to imagine."

"Does he mean to keep the power himself?"

"It looks like it."

"The power, but not the throne?"

"Why not the throne?"

"He dares not make himself king."

"I cannot say if he means to be absolutely king, but I do declare that he means to make himself something of the kind."

"He is nothing but a soldier of fortune."

"My dear fellow, better in these days to be the son of his own deeds than the grandson of a king."

The young man was thoughtful.

"I shall report all that to Cadoudal," he said.

"And add that the First Consul said these very words: 'I hold La Vendée in the hollow of my hand, and if I choose, in three months they will lay down their arms.'"

"It is a good thing to know it."

"You know it; let Cadoudal know it, and take measures."

At that instant the music suddenly ceased; the hum of the dancers died away; total silence prevailed; and then, in the midst of that silence, four names were pronounced in a sonorous, accentuating voice.

These four names were, Morgan, Montbar, Adler, and d'Assas.

"Excuse me," said Morgan to Tiffauges, "they are prob-

ably arranging some expedition for which I am wanted ; I am forced therefore, to my great regret, to bid you good-bye. Only, before we part, let me look a little nearer at your waistcoat and trousers, of which I have heard, — curiosity of an amateur, you know ; pray excuse it.”

“Why, of course,” said the young Vendéan, “most willingly.”

XXVII.

THE BEAR'S SKIN.

WITH a rapidity and good-nature that did honor to his politeness, he went close to the candelabra that were standing on the chimney-piece. The waistcoat and trousers appeared to be of the same stuff; but what was that stuff? The most experienced connoisseur in materials would have been puzzled.

The trousers were tight-fitting as usual, of a light tint, something between a buff and a flesh-color; the only remarkable thing about them was the absence of seam, and the closeness with which they clung to the leg. The waistcoat, on the other hand, had two characteristic signs which attracted attention: it had been pierced by three balls and the holes were left gaping, and these were colored carmine, so like blood that some might think the stains were blood. On the left side was painted a bloody heart, the distinguishing sign of a Vendéan. Morgan examined the two articles with the closest attention, but apparently without satisfying himself.

"If I were not in such a hurry," he said, "I should like to look into the matter for myself; but, you see how it is; in all probability some news has reached the committee, — government money, no doubt. You can announce it to Cadoudal; only, we have to go and take it first. I usually command these expeditions. If I delay now some one may take my place. But before I go, do tell me what your waistcoat and trousers are made of."

"My dear Morgan," said the Vendéan, "you have perhaps heard that my brother was taken in the environs of Bressuire and shot by the Blues?"

“Yes, I knew that.”

“The Blues were retreating; they left the body at the corner of a hedge. We were pursuing them closely, and got to that point directly after them; I found the body of my brother still warm. In one of his wounds a bit of stick was stuck, bearing these words: ‘Shot as a brigand, by me, Claude Flageolet, corporal of the 3d battalion of Paris.’ I took up my brother’s body; I had the skin of the breast taken off; I vowed that skin, pierced with three holes, should eternally cry vengeance before my eyes; I made it my battle waistcoat.”

“Ah!” exclaimed Morgan, with a certain astonishment, in which, for the first time, something that resembled terror mingled, “that waistcoat is made of your brother’s skin? And the trousers?”

“Oh!” said the Vendéan, “the trousers, that’s another matter. They are made of the skin of the legs of citizen Claude Flageolet, corporal of the 3d battalion of Paris.”

At this instant the same sonorous voice called out for the second time, in the same order, the names of Morgan, Montbar, Adler, and d’Assas.

Morgan sprang forward, crossed the dancing-hall from end to end, and made his way to a little salon on the opposite side to the dressing-room. His three associates, Montbar, Adler, and d’Assas were there already. With them was a young man wearing the government livery of a bearer of despatches, namely, green and gold; he also wore dusty boots and a visored cap, and carried a despatch-box, — the essential accoutrements of a cabinet courier.

One of Cassini’s maps, on which could be followed the whole lay of its land, was spread out upon a table.

Before saying why this courier was there, and with what object the map was unrolled, let us cast a glance at the three new personages whose names had echoed through the ball-room, for they are destined to play an important part in the rest of this history.

The reader already knows Morgan, the Achilles and the

Paris of this strange association, — Morgan, with his blue eyes, his black hair, his tall, well-built figure, his graceful, animated, and easy bearing, his eye, which was never without an eager look, his mouth, with lips so fresh and teeth so white, that was never without a smile; the man whose countenance and expression were so remarkable, composed as they were of mingling elements that seemed foreign to each other, — strength and tenderness, gentleness and energy, combined with a bewildering gayety that was at times alarming when the thought occurred that this man was rubbing shoulders perpetually with death, and the most horrifying of deaths — upon the scaffold.

As for d'Assas, he was a man from thirty-six to thirty-eight years of age, with bushy hair that was turning gray, though his eyebrows and moustache were black as ebony. His eyes were of that wonderful shade of Indian eyes, bordering on maroon. He was formerly a captain of dragoons, admirably formed for struggle, whether physical or moral, the muscles indicating strength, the face resolution. For the rest, a noble bearing, great elegance of manner, the habits of a dandy, carrying, either from caprice or luxury, a bottle of English smelling-salts, or a silver-gilt vinaigrette containing the most subtle or the most pungent perfumes.

Montbar and Adler, whose real names were unknown, like those of d'Assas and Morgan, were commonly called in the Company "the inseparables." Imagine Damon and Pythias, Euryalus and Nisus, Orestes and Pylades at twenty-two years of age; one joyous, loquacious, noisy, the other sad, silent, dreamy; sharing all things, dangers, money, mistresses; one the complement of the other; each rushing to all extremes, but forgetting self when in danger to help the other, like the Spartan youths of the sacred legions; imagine a modern realization of all that and you will have an idea of Montbar and Adler.

It is needless to add that all three were members of The Company of Jehu. They were now convoked, as Morgan had supposed, on business of the fraternity.

On entering the room Morgan went up to the pretended bearer of despatches and shook hands with him.

"Ah, the dear friend!" said the latter, with a stiff movement, proving that the best rider in the world cannot do a hundred and fifty miles at top speed on post-horses with impunity. "You are taking it easy, you Parisians; Hannibal at Capua slept on rushes in comparison with all of you. I only gave a glance into the ball-room, as became a poor cabinet courier bearing despatches from General Masséna to the First Consul, but it seemed to me that you have a fine lot of victims present. However, my dear friends, you must bid adieu to them for a time; disagreeable, unlucky, exasperating, no doubt, but the House of Jehu before all!"

"My dear Hastier —" began Morgan.

"No, no!" exclaimed Hastier. "No proper names, if you please, gentlemen. The Hastier family is an honest race in Lyon, doing business, as they call it, on the place des Terreaux, from father to son, and they would be much humiliated to learn that a scion of their stock was a cabinet courier and rode the highways with a despatch-box on his back. Lecoq, as much as you please, but Hastier, no! I don't know any Hastier; do you, gentlemen?" he continued, addressing Montbar, Adler, and d'Assas.

"No," they answered; "and we beg pardon for Morgan, who did wrong."

"My dear Lecoq —" said Morgan.

"That's all right," interrupted Hastier. "I answer to that name. Well, what do you want to say?"

"I want to say that if you are not the antipodes of the god Harpocrates, whom the Egyptians represent with a finger on his lips, you will, instead of indulging in a lot of flowery declamations, tell us why that map, and why that despatch-box."

"The deuce! if you don't know why already it is your own fault, not mine. I called you three times, caught as you doubtless were in the toils of some beautiful Eumenides imploring vengeance of a fine young man for the death of

her parents ; otherwise you would know as much as these gentlemen do, and I should n't be forced to sing an encore. Well, here 's what it is : simply the remaining treasure of the Berne bears, which General Lecourbe is sending to the First Consul by order of General Masséna. A trifle, only a hundred thousand francs, but they are afraid to send it over the Jura on account of the armed forces of M. Teyssonnet, who are, they think, likely to get hold of it ; so it will be sent by Geneva, Bourg, Mâcon, Dijon, and Troyes ; a much safer way — as they will discover when they try it ! ”

“ Good ! ”

“ We have been informed of this by Renard, who started at full speed for Gex and transmitted the news to l'Hirondelle, stationed for the time being at Châlon-sur-Saône, who in turn transmitted it at Auxerre to me, Lecoq, who have just done one hundred and thirty-five miles to bring it here to you. As for the secondary details, here they are. The treasure left Berne last octodi, 28th Nivôse, year VIII. of the Republic triple and indivisible. It ought to arrive at Geneva to-day, duodi, and leave to-morrow, tridi, in the diligence from Geneva to Bourg ; so that by leaving here to-night you will be able day after to-morrow, my dear sons of Israel, to meet the treasure of the Messrs. Bears somewhere between Dijon and Troyes, probably near Bar-sur-Seine or Châtillon. What say you ? ”

“ Say ! ” exclaimed Morgan, “ I don't think there is any saying about it ; we should never permit ourselves to touch the money of their Highnesses the bears of Berne if it were still in their possession ; but as it has changed hands once, I see no objection to its making a second change. Only, how are we to get off from here ? ”

“ Have n't you the post-chaise ? ”

“ True ; it is here in the coach-house. ”

“ And have n't you horses to take you the first stage ? ”

“ Yes. ”

“ And I suppose you have each a passport ? ”

“ We have each four. ”

“Well, then?”

“Yes, I know; but how are we to stop a diligence in a post-chaise? We don't take our ease in that way.”

“Why not?” said Montbar; “it would be original. I can't see why, if sailors board a vessel from another vessel, we could n't board a diligence from a post-chaise; novelty is everything; shall we try it, Adler?”

“I am willing,” was the reply, “but how about the postilion?”

“That's true,” said Montbar.

“The difficulty is foreseen, my sons,” said the courier; “a messenger has been sent to Troyes. You are to leave the post-chaise at Delbauges, and there you will find four saddle-horses stuffed with oats; you will then calculate your time, and the day after to-morrow — or rather, to-morrow, for it is now past midnight — to-morrow, between seven and eight in the morning, the money of Messrs. Bruin will have an anxious ten-minutes.”

“Shall we change our clothes?” asked d'Assas.

“Why?” asked Morgan. “I think we are very presentable as we are; no diligence could ever be relieved of unnecessary weight by a more elegantly dressed set of fellows. Let us take a good look at that map, transfer from the supper-room to the pockets of the carriage a pâté, a cold chicken, and a dozen of champagne, arm to the teeth in the arsenal, get our cloaks and — clack! postilion!”

“Yes,” said Montbar, “that's good advice — the food.”

“I should think so,” continued Morgan; “we can kill the horses if necessary, and be back here at seven in the evening, in time to show ourselves at the Opera.”

“And establish an alibi,” remarked d'Assas.

“Precisely,” said Morgan, with his imperturbable gayety. “How could men who applaud Mademoiselle Clotilde and Vestris at eight o'clock in the evening have been at Bar and Châtillon in the morning settling accounts with the conductor of a diligence? Come, let us look at the map, and choose our locality.”

The four young men put their heads together over the map.

"If I may give a bit of topographical advice," said the courier, "it would be to put yourselves in ambush just beyond Massu; there's a ford opposite to the Riceys—see, there!"

And the young man pointed to the place on the map.

"I should return by Chaource, there; from Chaource you have a department road straight as an arrow, which will take you to Troyes; at Troyes you take the carriage again and follow the road to Sens instead of that to Coulommiers. The donkeys (there are plenty in the provinces) who saw you in the morning won't see you on your return; you will get to the Opera at ten o'clock instead of eight—more fashionable hour—neither seen nor recognized, I'll warrant you."

"Adopted, so far as I'm concerned," said Morgan.

"Adopted!" repeated the other three, in chorus.

Morgan pulled out one of the two watches the chains of which were swinging from his belt; it was a masterpiece of Petitot's enamel, and on the outer case which protected the painting was a monogram in diamonds. The pedigree of this beautiful trinket was as well established as that of an Arab horse; it had been made for Marie Antoinette, who had given it to the Duchesse de Polastron, who in turn had given it to Morgan's mother.

"One o'clock," said Morgan. "Come, gentlemen, we ought to be changing horses three hours hence at Lagny."

From that moment the expedition had begun, and Morgan showed himself its leader; he no longer consulted others; he issued his commands.

D'Assas, who in Morgan's absence commanded, was the first to obey on his return.

Half an hour later a carriage containing the four young men wrapped in their cloaks was stopped at the barrier to Fontainebleau by the post-guard, who demanded passports.



PORTRAIT OF LUCIEN BONAPARTE.

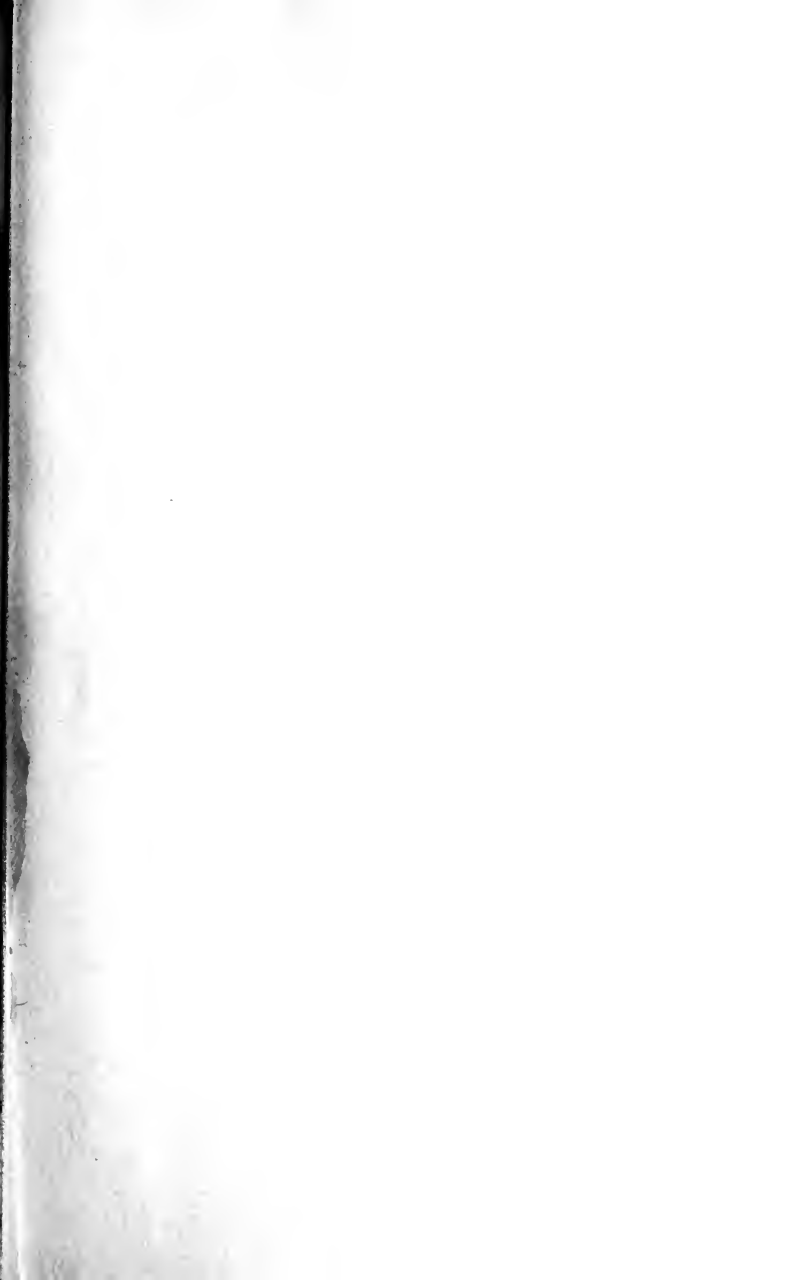


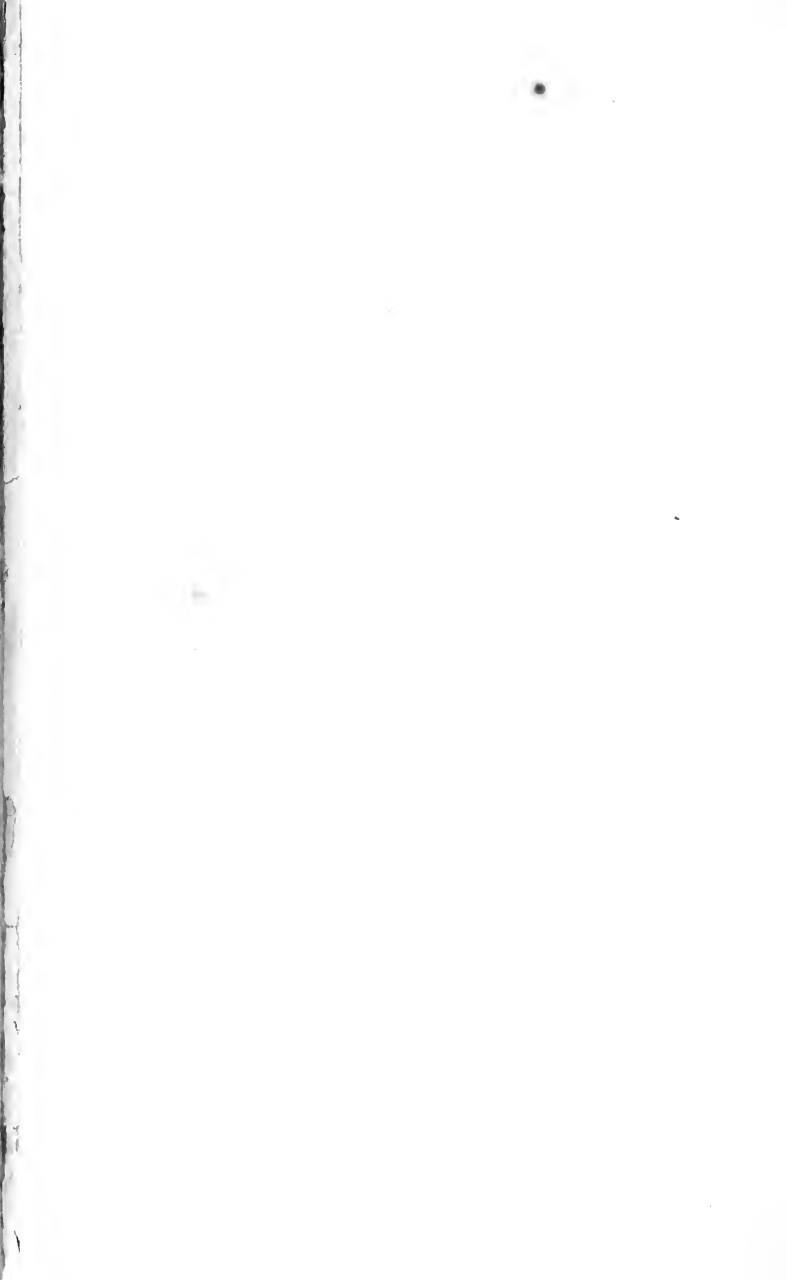
“Ah, what a joke!” said one of them, putting his head out of the door and affecting the pronunciation of the day: “passports to dwive to Gwobois and call on citizen Ba-as! You are cwazy, fwend! Go on, dwiver.”

The coachman whipped his horses, and the carriage passed through without further opposition.

END OF VOL. I.







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